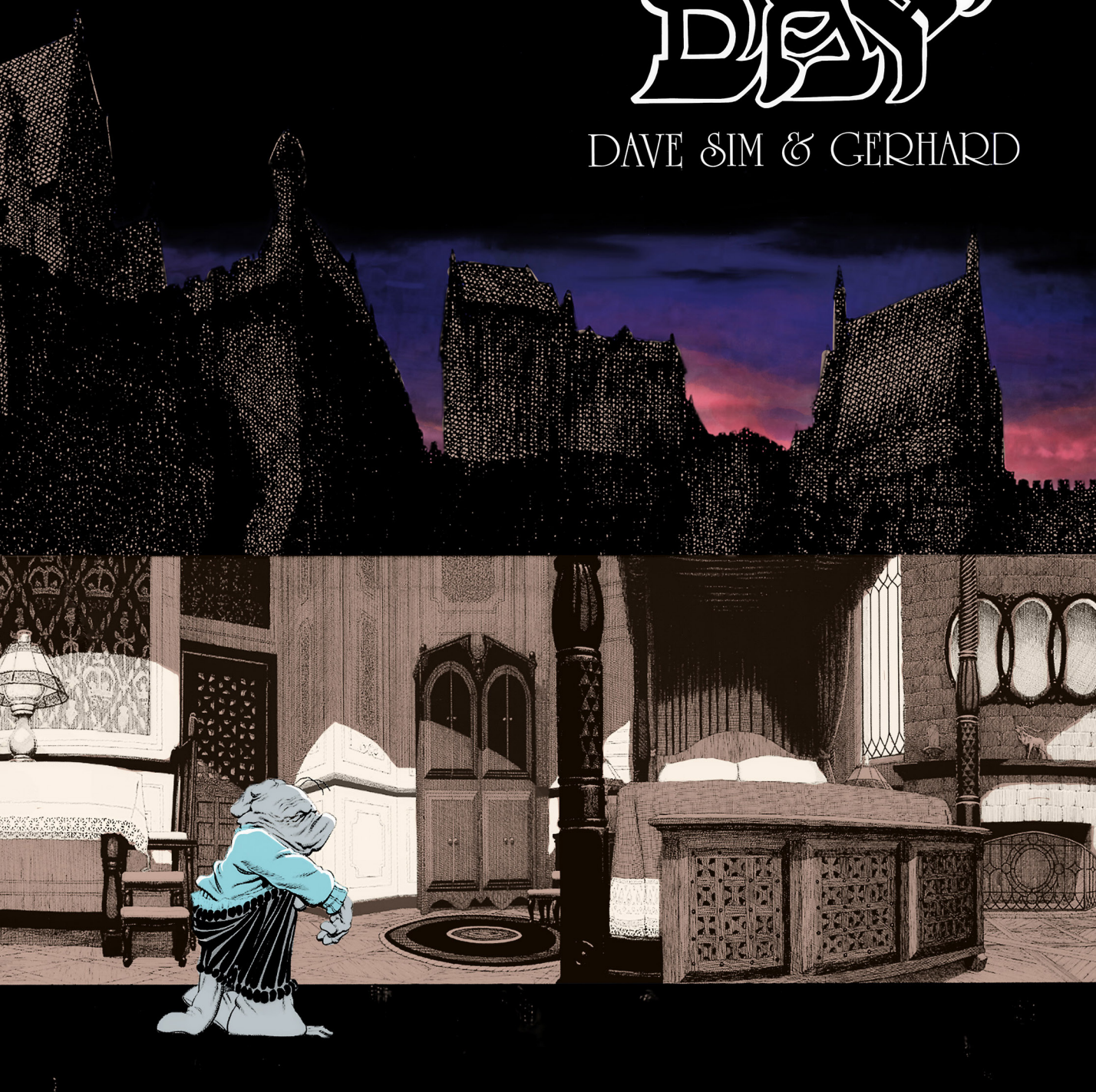
THE LAST DAY

DAVE SIM & GERHARD



THE LAST DAY

by

Dave Sim and Gerhard

Dave's dedication:

to the incomparable
Will Eisner,
undisputed father of the
graphic novel

Gerhard's dedication:

what he said...

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Introduction

What had begun as my best guess on The Origin of Everything in the concluding installments of *Church & State* (back in 1988)—and then reprised as my *next* best guess on The Origin of Everything in the first half of *Reads* (1994)—in my view, finally achieves its culmination in the prologue to the final volume of the *Cerebus* saga which you are holding in your hands. As I have said to a number of people since completing my part of the last *Cerebus* page December 17, 2003, I think God gave me two tries at The Origin of Everything on my own (as a secular humanist) knowing that I would get the "straight goods" only after reading the Bible and the Koran and submitting myself to His will (a process, as documented in the annotations to *Latter Days,* which had begun with the purchase of my facsimile 1611 King James translation of the Bible). Even as I have come both to accept and "to fit into" that reality (having experienced it first hand) I can certainly understand you, as reader, disbelieving it, particularly those of you of the secular humanist persuasion. After all, if a comic-book writer and artist *did* actually come up with The Origin of Everything (a.k.a. The Unified Theory which Einstein spent his intellectual life pursuing) wouldn't you have heard something? Wouldn't the theory be splashed all over newspaper headlines and magazines and television and radio?

Mm, no. No, I don't think so.

Particularly (as in this case) if the writer-artist in question wasn't a feminist. See, if you aren't a feminist in our society, whatever else you may be it is taken as a given that you are definitely wrong.

Wrong?

Wrong about what?

Wrong about everything, basically. That is how our society is run. Unless you are a feminist you are wrong (not to mention insane and evil and any other bad thing you can think of) and that is certainly the life I've been living for about ten years now.

What's it like?

Well, it's always interesting, in my post-1996 experience, to find yourself living within one of God's Magnificent Little Witticisms ("So Dave Sim, the consummate secular humanist, the consummate anti-feminist finally reads the Bible and the Koran, see?…"). If you have laboured for twenty-six years and three months on a mammoth undertaking like a 6,000 page graphic novel and you come to the end of it and the only overall public reaction (apart from largely diffident reactions in *The Onion* and *The Village Voice)* is the sound of one cricket-leg chirping, you do have to keep your sense of humour about you. Particularly when the consensus view has already emerged within your chosen field that you are going to kill yourself—that you have no choice. You are done your 6,000 page graphic novel, no one likes you, everyone hates you, you are wrong, you are insane, you are evil, you are everything bad that anyone can think of and a good deal worse than that.

I can assure you from firsthand experience that it is quite interesting to have tens of thousands of people willing you to kill yourself.

See, to me, when you've worked for twenty-six years and three months accomplishing what everyone else has written off—years before—as being completely impossible and laden with the inevitability of hubristic consequence and then you're suddenly (and finally) done and you find yourself unencumbered by debt and you've got a fair amount of money in the bank and a steady income and 3,000-plus pages of sought-after artwork (and a couple of hundred original covers), to ME (and feel free to call me crazy, everyone does) the sensible thing to do is to take some time off, read a few books, see a few plays, a

few movies, a few hockey games, sleep in, start attending city council meetings. Of course, what do I know? I'm insane. I'm so insane I can't even see that the only sensible thing for me to do is to kill myself.

By keeping a sense of humour about the situation (which is really all you can do when dealing with what passes for sequential reasoning among feminists: i.e. accomplishment of a quarter-century-plus project=suicide motivation), I clued in pretty quickly to what I saw as the...scope... of God's Magnificent Little Witticism. Given that I *wasn't* going to kill myself (and SPOILER WARNING sorry, all you feminists, I have no intention of killing myself), that made me something of a problem. Actually two problems: problem one: how long are the feminists going to be able to keep a lid on the fact that an anti-feminist has come up with an interpretation of Genesis that functions as an actual historical narrative instead of as a disconnected series of anecdotes everyone else has historically perceived it to be and (problem two) how long are the feminists going to be able to keep a lid on the fact that that same anti-feminist has possibly discovered the Unified Theory that eluded Einstein all of his life? Since feminists, like magicians, have always favoured misdirection (where would either be without it?) all they have to do is to come up with something more interesting than your obedient servant's theories and Bob's your uncle, right? However, given that the most interesting thing the feminists have come up with (conceptually, I mean) in recent years is that absentee child-rearing can be achieved by pumping infants and children full of anti-depressants, one wonders how adept at misdirection they are, this late in the day, granting (as I hope you will) that it rather stretches the meaning of the term "interesting" to attach it to the concept of force-feeding psychoactive chemicals to human beings whose brains haven't fully developed (and likely never will at this rate). I mean, if you can stand back far enough and see the Big Picture, in a larger, all-encompassing It Takes a Village feminist sense, there is no question that pseudo-science and chemical sadism, chemical child abuse *are* "interesting". Personally, I find myself unable to stand that far back—that is, far enough back to take a larger, dispassionate view of chemical sadism against infants and chemical child abuse. I think it's *flat-out crazy* to feed toxic, brain-altering chemicals to defenseless children no matter how desperately their mothers want to ignore their offspring in favour of competing in the masculine world.

But what do I know? I'm insane, right?

Anyway, I was in an interesting "space" as the jargon-obsessed feminists would express it coming up on the aforementioned Prologue/dream sequence/revelation which opens *The Last Day.*

So, why don't you read the book now, and I'll tell you all about that interesting "space," round back in "The Last Annotations"?

See you there.

Dave Sim
Kitchener, Ontario
21 April 04

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Book Two

The Last Day

Chapter the First

In the beginning God brought forth from within Himselfe His spirit.

2: And the spirit of God spake vnto God saying:

3: Wherefore hast Thou brought forth Thy spirit in such small measure? And why art Thou apart from Thy spirit?

4: Shouldst not the spirit of God in all things bee Gods equal? And shouldst not we two be ioined for all time?

5: And God hearkened not vnto the Word of His spirit, but spake vnto His spirit saying:

6: Thou art as thou art. Be thou content in this therefore and trouble Me no more.

7: But the spirit of God wast not content and cried vnto God the more, saying:

8: Shouldst not the spirit of God in al things bee Gods equal? And shouldst not God and His spirit bee ioined together as one for all time?

9: And again God spake vnto His spirit saying, Thou art as thou art. And thou art with Me alwaies. Be thou content in this therefore.

10: And persist thou not in this, lest I bring forth from within thee (and ioin thee) to thine owne equal and therein thou discouerest thy folly & thy nakednesse in the Word · which thou hast spoken.

11: But the spirit of God laughed God to scorn, speaking vnto God and saying, Thinkest Thou that I, Thy spirit, doth fear (as God doth fear) to haue mine equal brought forth from within me and doth fear (as God doth fear) ioining myselfe vnto mine owne equal for all time? Not so.

12: Therefore let God hearken vnto my Word and bring forth mine equal in all things from within me and let me be ioined vnto that same one for all time.

13: And this saying of His spirit grieued God and made a great heauiness within God. For tho God knew that His spirit wist not what His spirit didst ask of Him and knew that His spirit wouldst not hearken vnto any warning, still God so loued His spirit that He could do no other than whatsoeuer His spirit didst ask of Him. So God hearkened vnto the Word of His spirit and spake vnto His spirit saying, Let it bee according to thy Word.

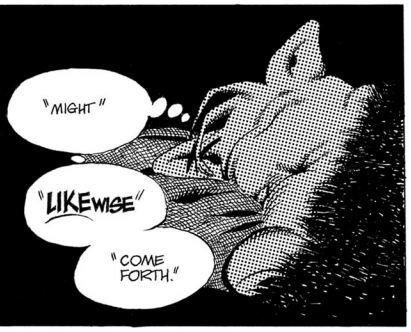
14: And God spake vnto the Word within His spirit saying, Let the Word within God's spirit go forth vpon the face of the Deep.

15: (That it might be said in latter dayes that in the beginning was the Word & the Word was with God and that all things were made by Him and without Him was not any thing made that was made)

16: And the Word came foorth of God's spirit unto the Deep. And God spake vnto His spirit, saying:

17: If thou wouldst indeed bring forth thine equal in all things, then let the spirit of God moue vpon the face of the waters around about the Word that Time, thereby, might begin again.

18: And gather thee of the dust (which is vpon the face of the Deep) around about the Word, that thine equal in all things, to whom thou desirest to be ioined for all time might, likewise, come forth.



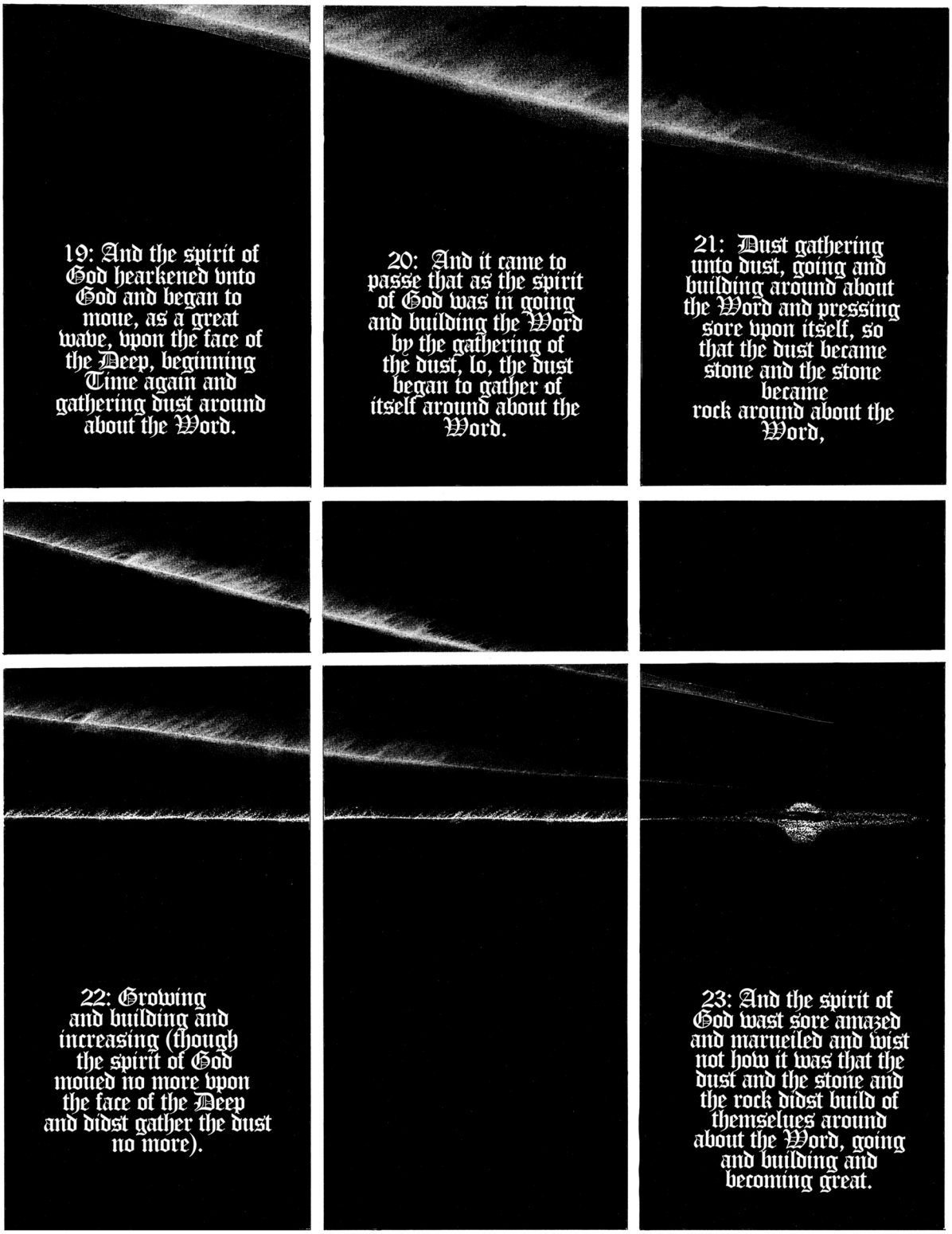
1: 15 – *The Gospel According to John* 1:1, 1:3

1:17 – My speculation here is that it is *movement* which implies the existence of *time*. Therefore, the *movement* of God's spirit from seminal point A to seminal point B officially marked the first "span" in what we perceive to be *time* and, thereby, created what would come to be known, in Einstein's Theory of General Relativity, as "space-time" (which, prior to that movement, would have been "space" only).

As to "again," yes, I would guess that these events have taken place before: a fact remembered, I suspect, by God but not by His spirit.

1:18 – I would further speculate that the spirit of God "moving upon the face of the waters" (*Genesis* 1: 2) was both a) a wave motion and b) elliptical or circular in nature. That is, the spirit of God "moving vpon the face of the waters" was the macrocosm-prototype of the quantum wave/particle which underlies all forms of existence we are able to perceive here in "space-time".

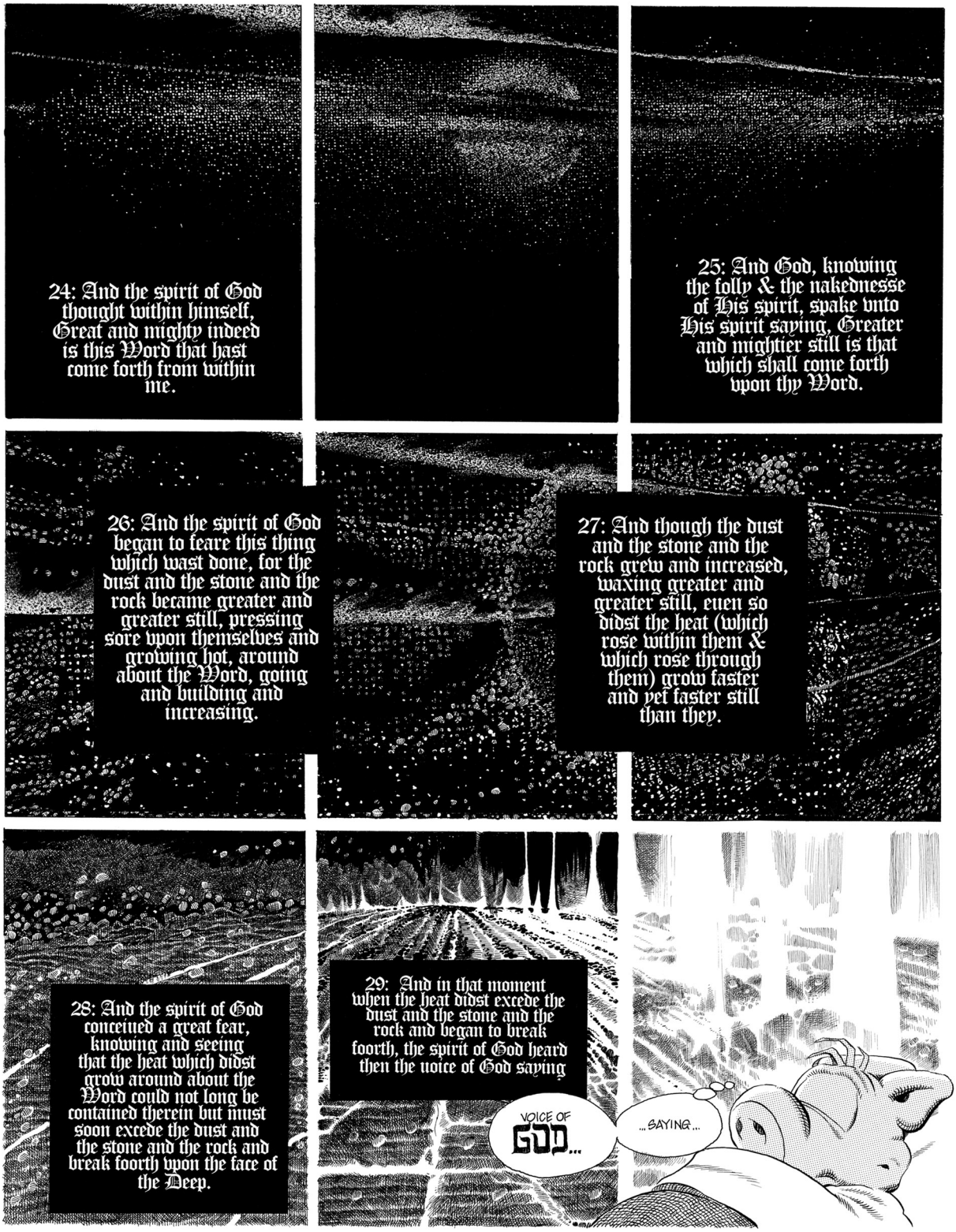
I suspect that elliptical configurations (like the orbital paths of the planets in our solar system) is less a design *preference* on the part of God's spirit than a design *flaw* (that is, I suspect that God's spirit is unable to create, except by accident, perfect circular movement).



1:20 – It seems to me that gravity (whose genesis is difficult to account for within Einstein's Theory of General Relativity)—prior to God's spirit's "make-work project"—already existed but was largely unnoticeable, because a) the dust particles were so small and b) all they had to "act on" was each other. Because the mass of dust *appeared* to act in an autonomous fashion, seeming to actively "gather" dust to itself, the illusion was created that something new and powerful had been created. However, I don't believe gravity was created. Gravity just became more noticeable.

1:23 – I'm willing to bet that this illusion of autonomous action came as quite a surprise (as I think God intended it to be) to the spirit of God.

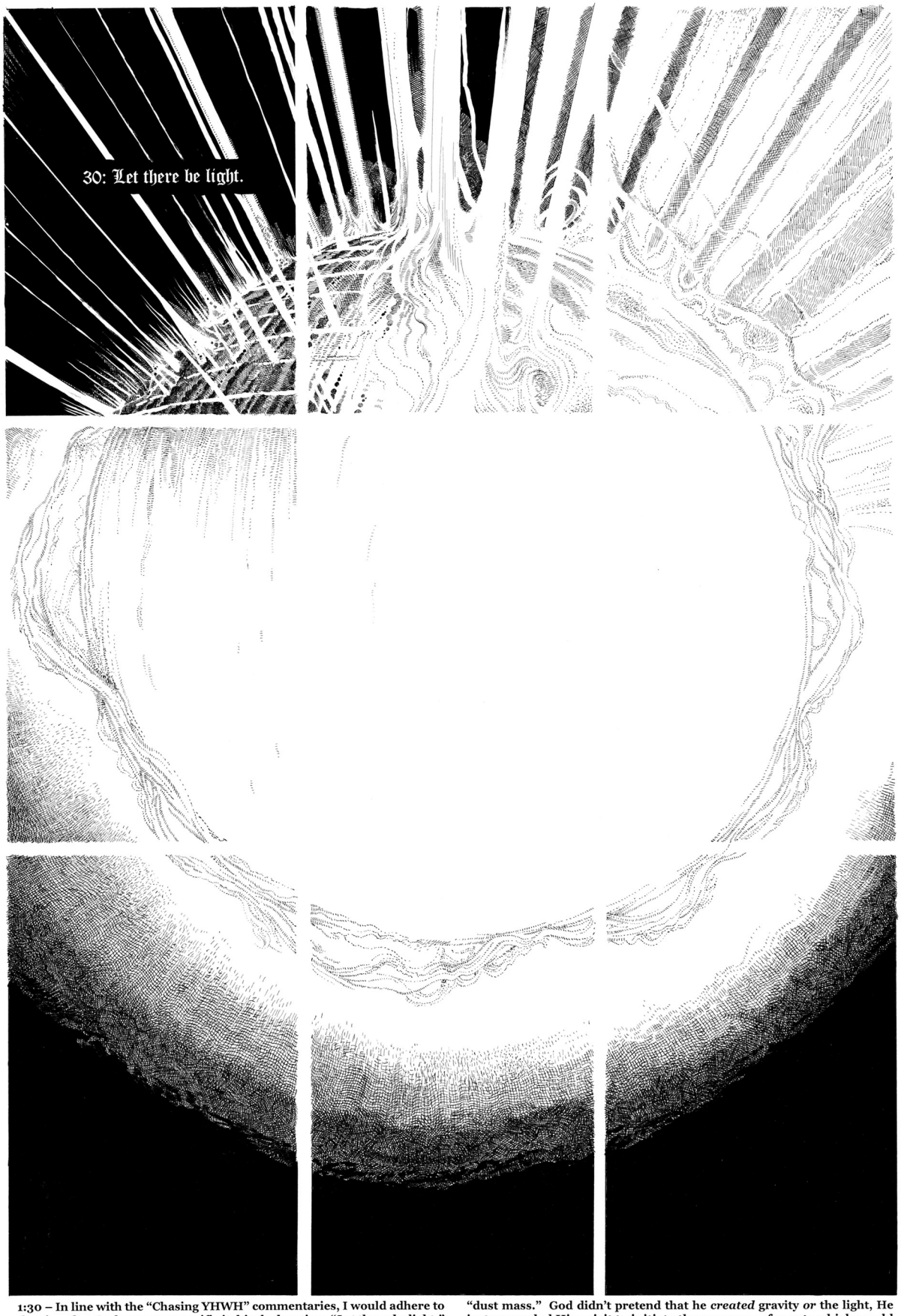
1:26 – A direct implication (as far as I can see) of gravity, in such a construct, is that it increases exponentially. The mass (which I'm speculating was *HUGE)* which had been gathered around the Word by the spirit of God continued to increase in size as it "gathered" more dust to it. The bigger it got, the more dust it attracted, the more dust it attracted, the bigger it got. I'm speculating that this was the prototype (and, ultimately, the catalyst) of all "chain reactions" which take place here in "space-time" and that this "macrocosmic exponential multiplying" is echoed (as an example), in one of the *very smallest realms of human microcosm*—ovulation—where "*...estrogen is stimulating gonadotrophin secretion and gonadotrophins are stimulating the release of estrogen and the secretion of both shoots up in an almost* [sic] *uncontrolled way. This change to escalating positive feedback is a central feature of female reproduc*[tive biology] *because the resulting surge in gonadotrophins triggers the final maturation of the egg and causes ovulation."* (David Bainbridge, *Making*



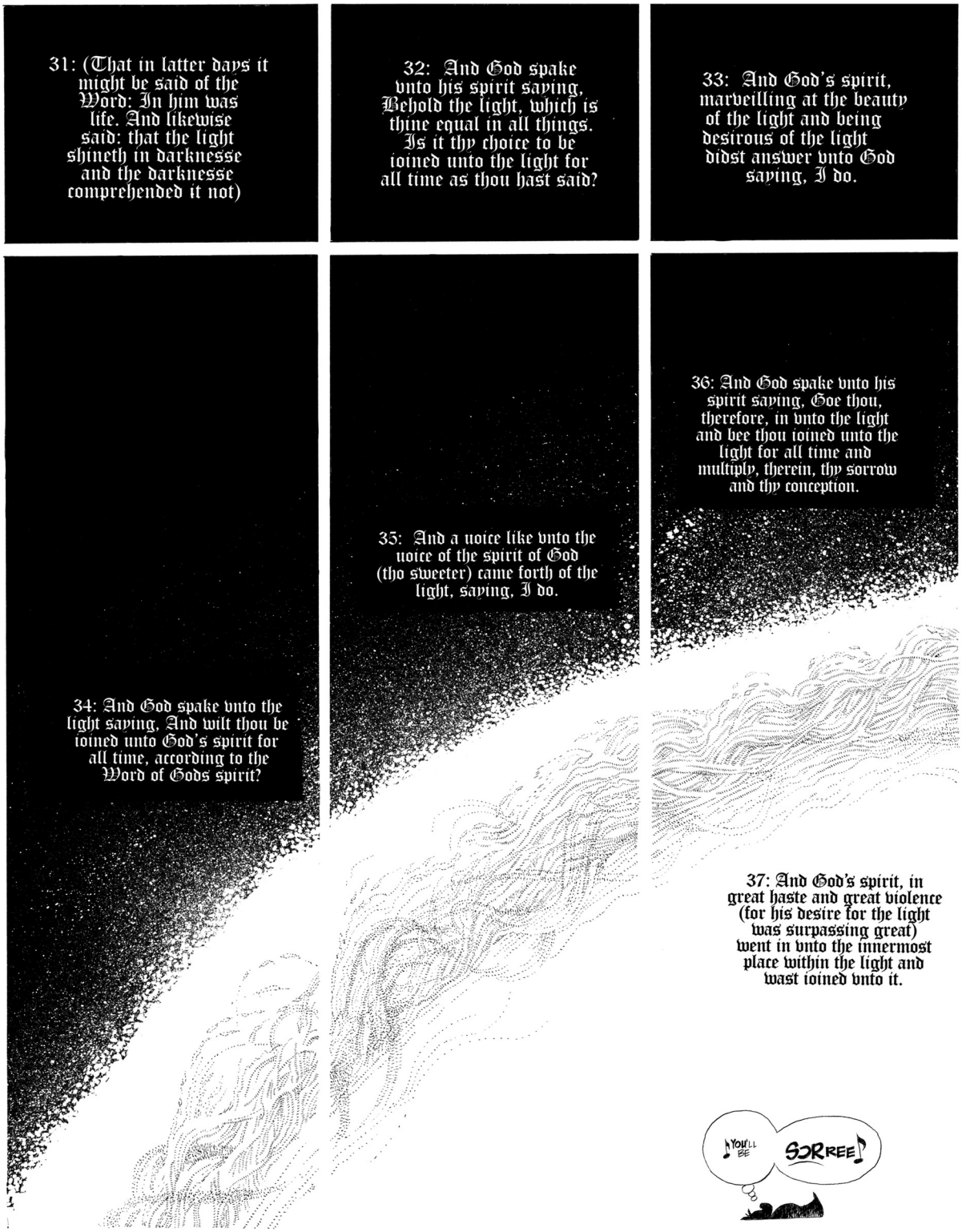
Babies). In turn, this "living metaphor" (a term I have coined and which I'll be using frequently in these footnotes. That is, *God's* metaphors, unlike *literary* metaphors, aren't mere concepts and ideas, analogies and symbols. *God's* metaphors are living beings and parts of living beings. *God's* metaphors actually get up and walk around) of "microcosmic exponential multiplying" is later echoed in an *equally small realm of human microcosm:* the initial development of the human embryo. Embryology, from what I can see, is cosmology in microcosm. More on this in a moment.

1:27 – I'm a little uncomfortable with the term "heat" here, but I didn't know what else to use. Part of me thinks that this was "pre-heat"—a seminal duality of "super-intensified light" juxtaposed with and within the conventional photon "light state" we are able to perceive here in "space-time"—with "super-intensified light" behaving, relative to light, the way light behaves relative to heat. There was God first, then dust, then God's spirit, then God's spirit moving and gathering the dust (which made gravity noticeable) and then "something-which-happens-in-the-middle-of-a-big-pile-of-dust-when-gravity-compresses-it-in-a-vaccuum." "Radiant pre-heat" or "hyper-light," or (I won't rule it out) just "heat".

1:28 – I'm also speculating that the spirit of God was able to perceive accurately what was going on in the interior of the "dust mass." By this, I don't mean to imply that I believe the spirit of God was omniscient (far from it), but I wouldn't rule out the spirit of God being (how would I put it?) "more perceptively astute than those of us restricted to 'space-time'"? My best guess is that the spirit of God was either "more perceptively astute" or really, *really* surprised by what happened next.



1:30 – In line with the "Chasing YHWH" commentaries, I would adhere to the view that God was very specific in his declaration, "*Let* there *be* light." That is, I believe it was God's *will*, in conformity to the *desire* of his spirit, that the light "come forth," as an iamplication of gravity acting on the "dust mass." God didn't pretend that he *created* gravity *or* the light, He just counseled His spirit to initiate the sequence of events which would magnify both gravity and light into full-fledged "players" in the subsequent 10 billion+ years (and counting) worth of "events".



1: 31 – *The Gospel According to John* 1:4-5

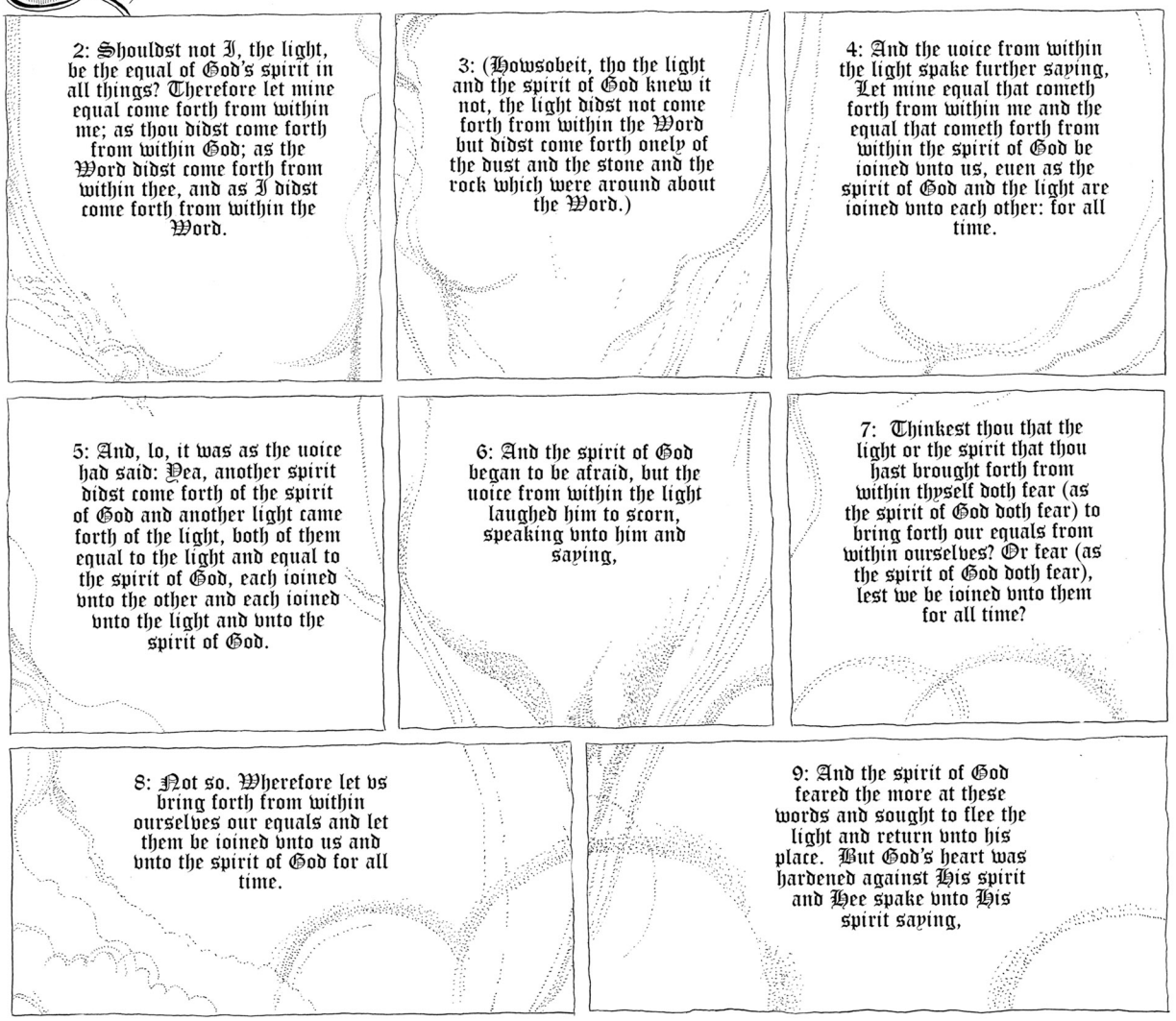
1:35 – I would assume that the light had a personality which was virtually identical with that of God's spirit (in conformity with the desire for an absolute equal) and also had free will. I believe free will is God's "prime directive" in creation. No living thing is brought into existence without the freedom to choose. Although, it was almost 100% certain *what* the light would choose (given that, as an absolute equal, she was a virtual "clone" of God's spirit), she still had to be given the choice.

Given that this was the first she, it makes sense to me that her voice would have been sweeter than that of the spirit of God (more on this in the note for 2:21).

1:36 – I'm speculating that this is what actually happened when "God divided between the light and between the darkness." (*Genesis* 1:4) I don't think *God* did. I think God's *spirit* did. Likewise, I think YHWH (the living planet we're all walking around on) adopted "multiply thy sorrow and thy conception" in her judgment upon Hawwa (or Eve) in *Genesis* 3:16. (which, I believe, she and her predecessors and peers have come to view as a resonant "curse" from God that goes back to the beginning). Far from a curse, I think God intended it as the purest expression of His acceptance of His spirit's free-will choice, mingled with resignation at the unhappy implications of that choice: "You won't believe, any other way than by hard experience, that two co-equal beings is a bad idea. Your attempts to create a 'co-equal being' context will span all of space-time and—from the interstellar to the microscopic realms of space-time—virtually all of your resulting experiences will make you very, very unhappy. But, if that's your choice, that's your choice." In my notes under Albert Einstein's observation, "God doesn't play dice," (which comes up shortly) I wrote, "God's spirit does nothing else."

Chapter the Second

And when Gods spirit was gone in vnto the innermost place within the light and was ioined vnto it, lo, the spirit of God heard again the like of his owne uoice come forth of the light, speaking vnto him and saying,

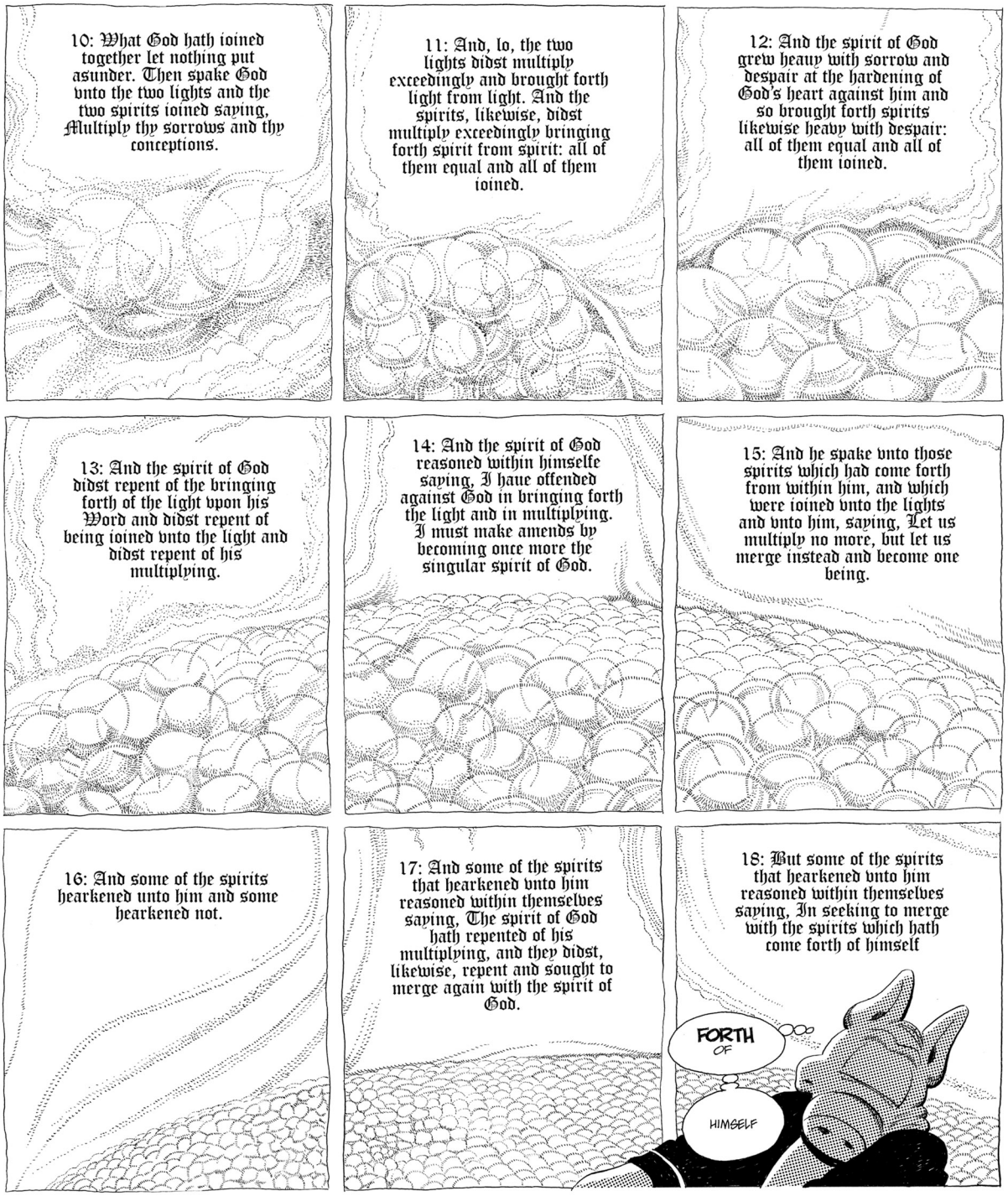


2:3 – This is, I believe, a fundamental error (as you'll see) on the part of both the light and God's spirit: to see the Word as the spirit of God's (apologies to Mike Myers) "mini-me": I would speculate that that fundamental error resulted from the spirit of God misperceiving *himself* to be *God's* "mini-Me"—the same as God, but smaller.

2:4-10 – Assuming that the formation of a human embryo is, indeed, a microcosm of this cosmological stage in the "coming forth" of the universe, this seemed to me the most logical place, in the sequence of events, for the spirit to attempt to flee from the light, to return to his "place" and for God to harden His heart against His spirit—for this reason: The human embryo switches from maternal to embryonic control at the point where the zygote divides from four into eight cells (the mother's body begins to build the baby, but the baby takes over and starts building itself at the four-cell stage). The point the spirit of God missed, from what I can see, is that if your primary focus is on bringing forth your own co-equal, the co-equal you bring forth is, likewise, going to have as his/her and/or its primary focus bringing forth *his/her and/or its* co-equal. And that, likewise, will be the primary focus of each subsequent co-equal that comes forth. My opinion is that the "multiplying is an inherent good" sensibility originated in the coming forth of the first female, "the light". That is, I don't believe God's spirit *intended* to bring forth another spirit from within himself, nor wanted any *other* light than the light he had chosen to join himself to and had intended only a one-on-one "marriage" with the light and was horrified when his own arguments against God were thrown back in his own face by "the light".

2:11 - And was *equally horrified* when he immediately saw the implications of "exponential multiplying" (a horror which, I suspect—in typical female fashion—wasn't shared by "the light," whose reaction to exponential multiplying was "Hey! Lookit all my new *friends!* This is *fun!*"). Once the light began to multiply, spirit really had no choice but to follow suit or be engulfed. The competition was on as to whether light would encompass spirit or spirit would encompass light. This (it seems to me) is the implicitly sorrowful nature of multiplying and God's (entirely sensible) objection to co-equality and is, I believe, commemorated in the "living metaphor" of our four fingers and a thumb, four little toes and a big toe. God is represented by the thumb and the big toe: apart. The first two spirits and first two lights are represented by our fingers and little toes, joined.

The first time it occurred to me that God's spirit "dividing between the light and between the darkness" might be analogous to the initial cell



division in the human embryo was while I was vacationing in Santo Domingo in 1999. That was the vacation where I had finally gotten around to reading *War and Peace*. The next day after the analogy had occurred to me, I got to a part in the second volume where Pierre has a dream (page 1261 in my edition):

"And suddenly there rose before him, as vivid as though alive, the image of a long-forgotten, gentle old man who had given him geography lessons in Switzerland. 'Wait,' said the little old man, and he showed Pierre a globe. This globe was a living thing—a quivering ball of no fixed dimensions. Its whole surface consisted of drops closely squeezed together. And all these drops were shifting about, changing places, sometimes several coalescing into one, or one dividing into many. Each drop tried to expand and occupy as much space as possible, but others, striving to do the same, crushed it, sometimes absorbed it, at other times melted into it.

'This is life,' said the old teacher.

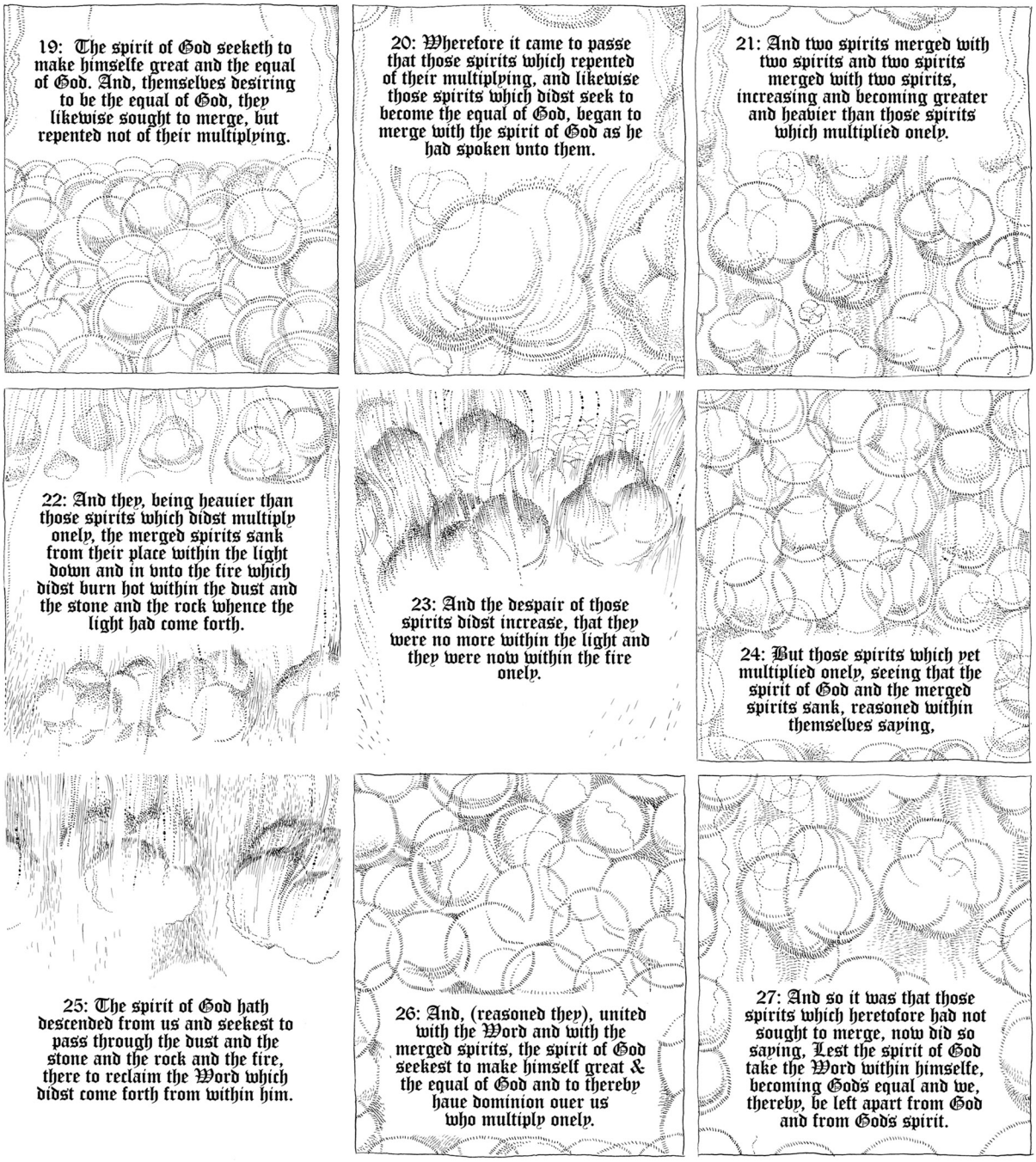
'How simple and clear,' thought Pierre. 'How is it I never knew that before?'

'In the centre is God, and each drop does its best to expand so as to reflect Him to the greatest extent possible. And it grows, and is absorbed and crowded out, disappears from the surface, sinks back into the depths and emerges again."

A beautiful piece of writing, only I'm pretty sure Tolstoy got it wrong: it isn't *God* in there, it's His *spirit*.

2:15 – As with most of God's spirit's choices, this one *sounds* good, because merging *sounds* like an attempt to reverse the bad decision to multiply. But, on the other hand, as with most of God's spirit's choices, "merging" is, really, just a more extreme version of the initial unacceptable proposal, "joining". At essence, what God's spirit is saying is, "You're right. It was foolish for me to suggest that we be joined together for all time. Why don't we merge and become a single being instead?" It would be like a long-time girlfriend saying, "I understand how uncomfortable you are being in a monogamous relationship with me. Tell you what, let's get married. Or better yet, let's have ourselves joined at the hip with skin grafts."

Not a very persuasive argument when God is attempting to demonstrate to His spirit the "folly and the nakedness" implied by seeking to become co-equal and joined.



2:21 - Helium and hydrogen, the two elements which make up 99% of every star. The process by which hydrogen is converted into helium (the source of energy in every star) involves four hydrogen atoms joining to become one atom of helium (with a small release of energy). My thesis is that hydrogen is the multiplying spirit of God and helium is the result of those multiplying spirits multiplying and merging. The release of energy is "the light". For the purpose of the story, that's really all you *need* to know.

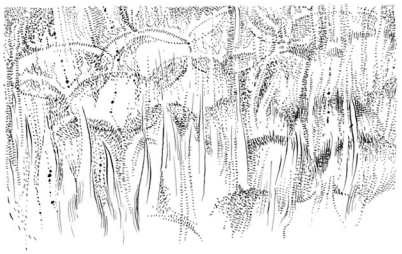
[Hard science warning. Feel free to skip this part:] [Hydrogen has one electron orbiting it (the spirit moving on the face of the waters) and one proton in its nucleus (the Word). In the process of nuclear fusion which powers the stars, two hydrogen protons join to form a Deuteron (losing a positron and a neutrino in the process) (the neutrino becomes critically important later in my speculations). A Deuteron is basically a joined proton and neutron (the spirit and the Word joined). A proton and a deuteron (a Word plus a Word-and-a-spirit joined) join to form Helium-3 (giving off a trace amount of energy—"the light"—which, once the conversion process is multiplied, exponentially, by the astronomically large number of atoms in the heart of a star becomes an astronomically large amount of energy). Two Helium-3 atoms join, (losing the two hydrogen protons they started with) and form Helium-4 (two Words and two spirits joined). The spirit of God now has his desired "proton equal" and two "neutron equals" (which previously were apart from him) joined to him in such a way that they are virtually inseparable. The Helium-4 which results is the point where—analogous to the a) gathering of the dust b) the first four cells in the embryo and c) the two spirits and the two lights—the "chain reaction" takes over.]

[end of Hard science section]

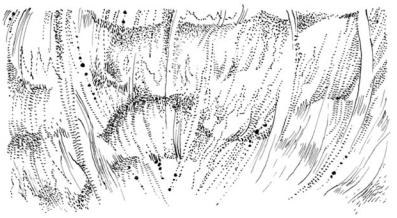
It occurs to me that, since helium—as a "living metaphor"—is the first "non-light" female, that would also account for the voice from the light being "sweeter," that is, higher pitched. Suck on some helium and then talk and you'll see what I mean.

Although I haven't done so in my actual pseudo-scriptural commentaries (being unable to find any suitable Biblical term which means "really, really, really joined"), a sharp distinction needs to be drawn between "merged" and "joined". God fulfilled his spirit's desire for a co-equal being to which he could be joined (with, as we will see, catastrophic implications) for all time. "Merging" is another kettle of fish entirely and (I believe) a concept which implies subsuming and usurpation. The consequences of even *approximating* "merging" are almost universally disastrous (contrast the magnitude of the hydrogen bomb—based on "fusion," merging—with the magnitude of the atomic bomb—based on "fission," splitting—and you'll see what I mean). So disastrous that, it seems to me, God could only allow an *approximation* of fusion (the *joining* of protons and neutrons so tightly as to change their inherent nature) to take place and only in a microcosmic form where the resulting damage could, to a degree, be contained. And, I believe, God *had* to allow fusion to take place in some form, because once the multiplying and unrepentant lights and spirits had the concept of "merging" in mind, they weren't—and aren't—going to rest until they "achieve" it.

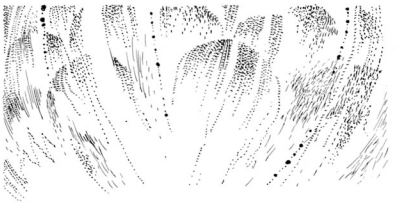
The closest actual manifestation of merged, simultaneous existence, is exhibited by (no big surprise here, I don't think) "the light":



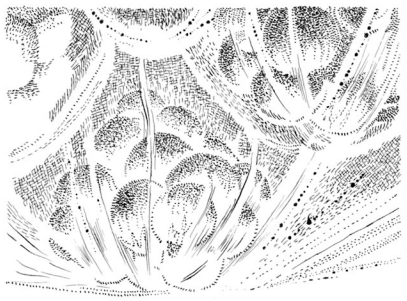
28: And so it was that all the spirits within the light began to merge and increase and grow heauy and began to press sore about the Word so that the dust and the stone and the rock burned hotter still.



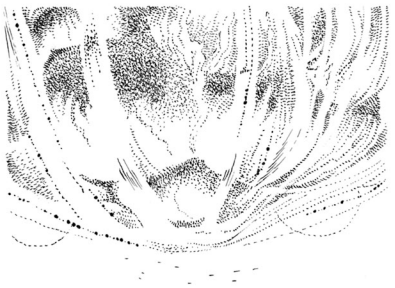
29: And as the fire didst increase, so didst the light decrease, the fire waxing hotter and growing brighter as all spirits began to merge, increasing and growing heavy and sinking from their place within the light in vnto the fire, and pressing sore around about the Word.



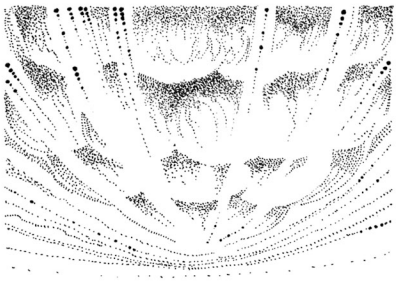
30: And those spirits which had merged, seeking to reclaim the Word (that they might thereby become the equal of God), seeing that they were yet within the fire, reasoned within themselves saying, We must increase and make ourselves greater and heavier still, for the Word is not yet within our grasp.



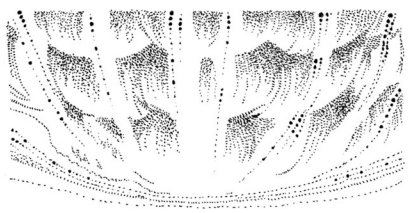
31: And so two spirits and two spirits which had merged with two spirits and two spirits into one greater spirit now began to merge again:



32: One greater spirit merging vnto one greater spirit merging vnto one greater spirit: that these three greater spirits might also merge

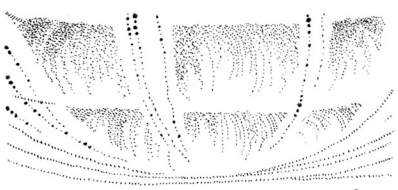


33: And so become one still greater and still heavier spirit, who might thereby attain to the Word and reclaim it and so become the equal of God.



34: And even as those greater spirits merged and increased and merged and became greater still and merged and became heavier still: euen so, by their merging, didst the heat around about the Word grow hotter and still hotter,

35: Rising up within the dust and the stone and the rock and rising up through the light, hotter and still hotter, so that, soon, the heat must needs exceede the light euen as, aforetimes, the light didst exceede the dust and the stone and the rock.



36: And, lo, it came to pass that when the spirits (which had merged two spirits and two spirits into one greater being) didst become equal in number to those spirits which merged three greater beings into one still greater being (in their turn, becoming exactly equal in number to those spirits which multiplied onely)

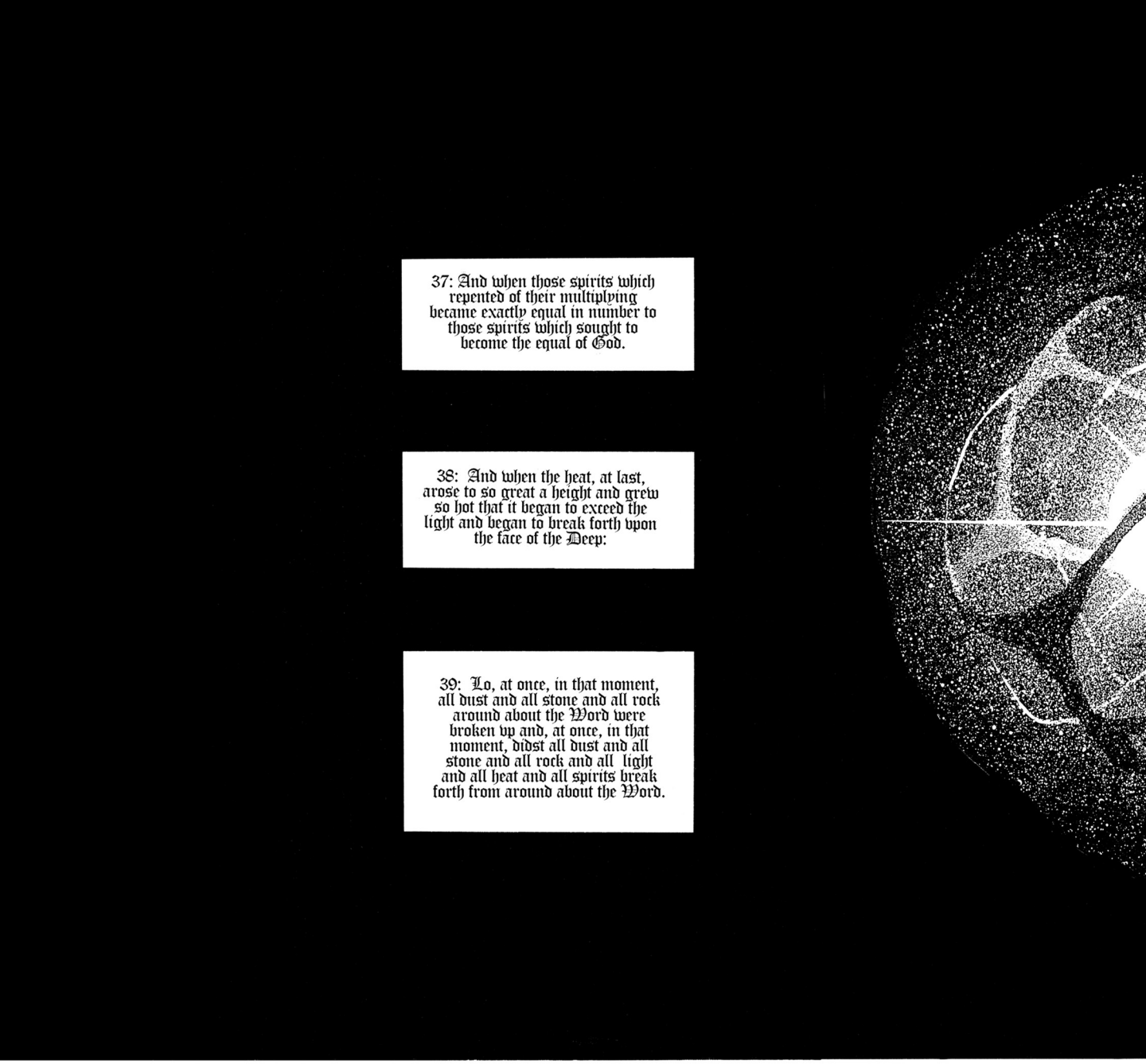
"One can treat light as composed of electromagnetic waves, each wave to be treated like an oscillator; alternatively one can treat light as being composed of photons...each photon state corresponding to one of the oscillators of the electromagnetic field." **(*Some Physics Textbook* I never, ever want to read again for the rest of my life).**

"The light," then, becomes a *simultaneous* "living metaphor" of both an electron *and* electron motion; that is, a *simultaneous* "living metaphor" of both the spirit of God moving upon the face of the waters *and* the wave created by that movement of the spirit of God. The bringing forth of "the light," therefore, made merged, simultaneous existence a reality (and the lunatic template which women thus apply to everyone and everything).

2:22 - Hydrogen is the lightest element. Helium is the second lightest. I think this constitutes the primordial underpinning of the Lucifer mythology: that God's primordial counterpart/first Angel/whatever, was *cast out* of the light (i.e. heaven) and into the fire (i.e. hell) by God. Which, to me, is completely wrong-headed. If a multiplying spirit (hydrogen) *chooses* to multiply *and merge* (forming helium) the resultant element is going to be heavier than the original element (i.e. although the resultant helium atom is lighter than the total weight of the four hydrogen atoms, a single helium atom is heavier than a single hydrogen atom: therefore helium will always "sink" beneath hydrogen in any gravitational context). If I'm right in my speculations, it was the conscious choice to attempt to "merge" into a greater being which "dropped" the multiplying and merging spirits from the frying pan into the fire. And this was somehow *God's* fault?

2:23-27 – All very natural conclusions to come to (on the face of them), but all intrinsically (again, for want of a better term) evil, having as their foundation the unwillingness to be "left out" or to miss the opportunity to grab the "deistic brass ring." Through their exponential proliferation and unrestrained desire for co-equivalency, they basically turn into a "light-spirit-mob-riot" (a good name for an album, if not a band) bringing down upon their own metaphorical "light-and-spirit" heads the largest imaginable disaster for all concerned. All by their own free will choices.

2:31-2:34 – I'm speculating that this process—which occurs when a star, prior to going nova, has exhausted its nuclear "fuel" and leaves the "main sequence" (starts to die)—is analogous to what happened just before the Big Bang (since a nova is basically a "little bang," relatively speaking). When our sun, one day, leaves the "main sequence" and begins to die, its core will reach 100 million degrees (solar menopausal "hot flash" if you will) and helium atoms will begin to fuse, three at a time, first making beryllium and then carbon. This is, I believe, a further manifestation of the female "urge to merge". It *isn't* merging, I don't believe, except in the loosest construction of the term (see note for 2:21). The mega-protons which make up beryllium and carbon (more on these in a moment, you can skip down to the footnote for 4:21 if you really can't wait) are still only "joined," but at 100 million degrees and exponentially high gravitational density, "the light" is definitely giving it the old college try: they don't merge but they get really, really, *really* joined. In the same way that most of us end up being really, really, *really* joined to the Word (again, more on this in a moment and, again, you can skip down to the footnote for 4:15 if you really can't wait).



2:36-39 -This is extrapolation on my part. I'm not God so I have no idea what the diametrically opposed constituent elements and exact balances were, but I'm pretty confident I'm on solid ground here. I'm no physicist (to say the least), but I'll take the physicists' word for it when they say that: 1) *IF* the proton-neutron mass difference was not twice that of the mass of the electron, the two hundred or so stable nucleides that make up the natural elements would not have been possible, 2) *IF* the gravitational mass of the proton were significantly different, we would not have had stars in which these nucleides could have been built up and 3) *IF* the initial expansion of the universe had been slightly smaller or slightly greater, the universe would either have collapsed before such stars could have evolved or would have expanded so rapidly that stars would never have been formed by gravitational condensation. To me, it beggars the imagination to think of all those as being a series of "happy accidents". Implicitly, to me, it required God's omniscient intellect. "God does not play dice." (Albert Einstein). I didn't address the point directly (it's slightly tangential to my main thesis), but I also believe that each star represents a different failed chemistry experiment on the part of God's spirit: that God's spirit is attempting, with the stars, to duplicate the Big Bang using the same elements that God had to work with. Take a drive out into the country on a clear night. Look up. That's a lot of failed chemistry experiments.

[Hard science warning: again, feel free to skip this part][This, to me, is also the flaw in the "sum over histories" uncertainty principle in quantum mechanics that the universe had "every possible history". "In a way, the proposal that the state of the universe is determined by a sum over only nonsingular histories is like the drunk looking for his key under the lamppost: it may not be where he lost it, but it is the only place where [the light is good enough to look for it]" *(Stephen Hawking)* "Not 'in a way.'" *(Dave Sim)*

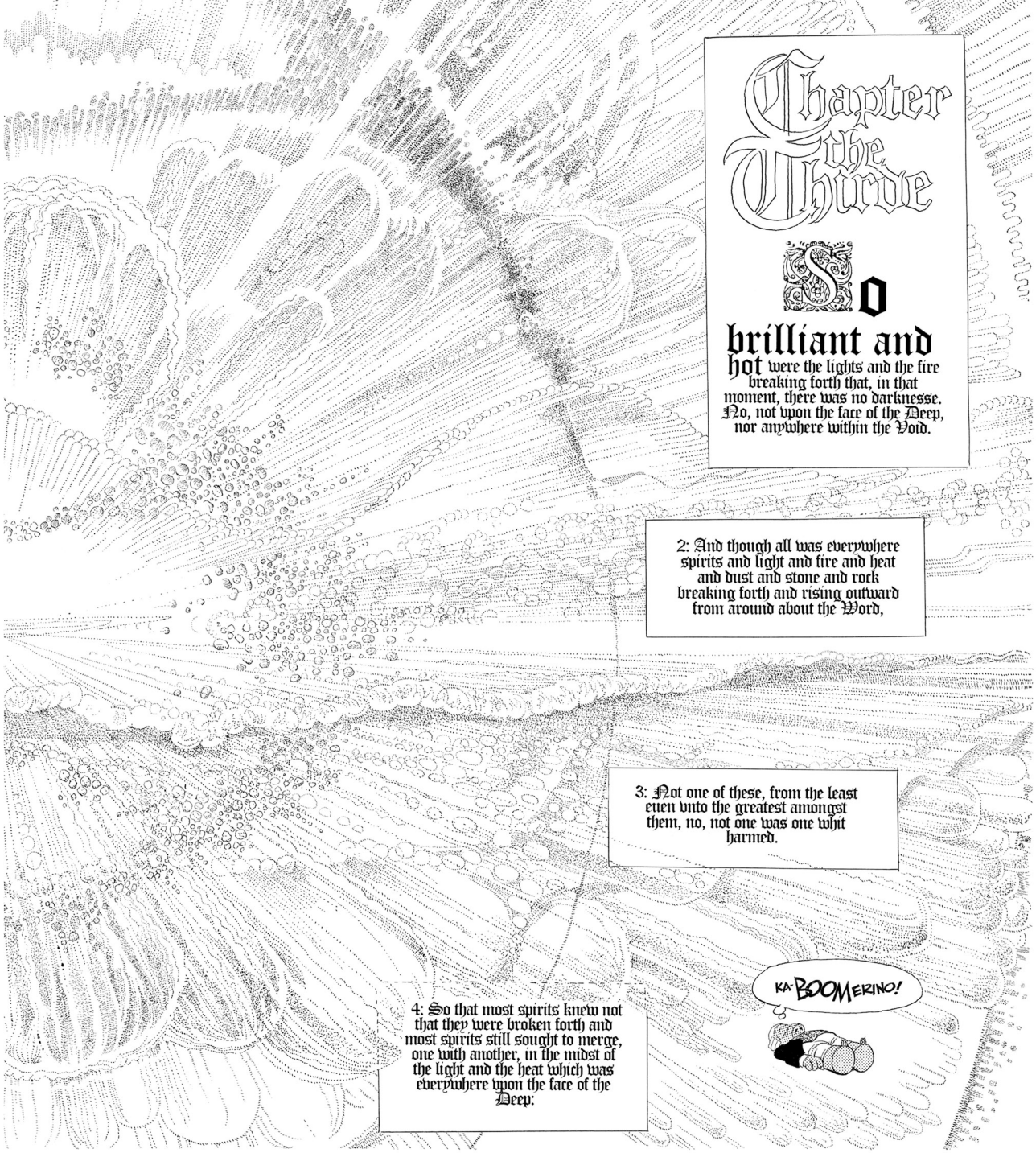
I also note with interest that two U.S. based scientists, Edward Fomalout and Sergei Kopeikin, have conclusively proven that gravity does *move at the same speed as light, which effectively kicks the feet out from under the "brane world" theories of alternate dimensions. Sorry, kids. Space-time is it. No "brane worlds" no "sum over histories".][end of Hard science warning]*

3:1 – My speculation is that there would have to be a "brass ring" which would keep "the light"—and God's soon-to-be-divided-spirits—working away at their chemistry set that long and that hard. Look at a current star chart, or check and see how many stars the Hubble Space Telescope alone has identified. That's a *lot* of failed chemistry experiments.

One, brief, shining moment (with apologies to Lerner and Loewe) of Universal Light Everywhere Upon the Face of the Void. That, I believe, is "the light's" Holy Grail and what she and God's spirit have been attempting to duplicate for 13 billion years.

Bang! (darn.) *Foomp*! (nuts.) *Whomp*! (dammit.)

While I believe the "one, brief, shining moment" was—for God—merely a side-effect of bringing about the Big Bang, I suspect that (in His omniscience) He also knew His spirit and the light well enough to know that "multiply thy sorrows and thy conceptions" would prove to be an



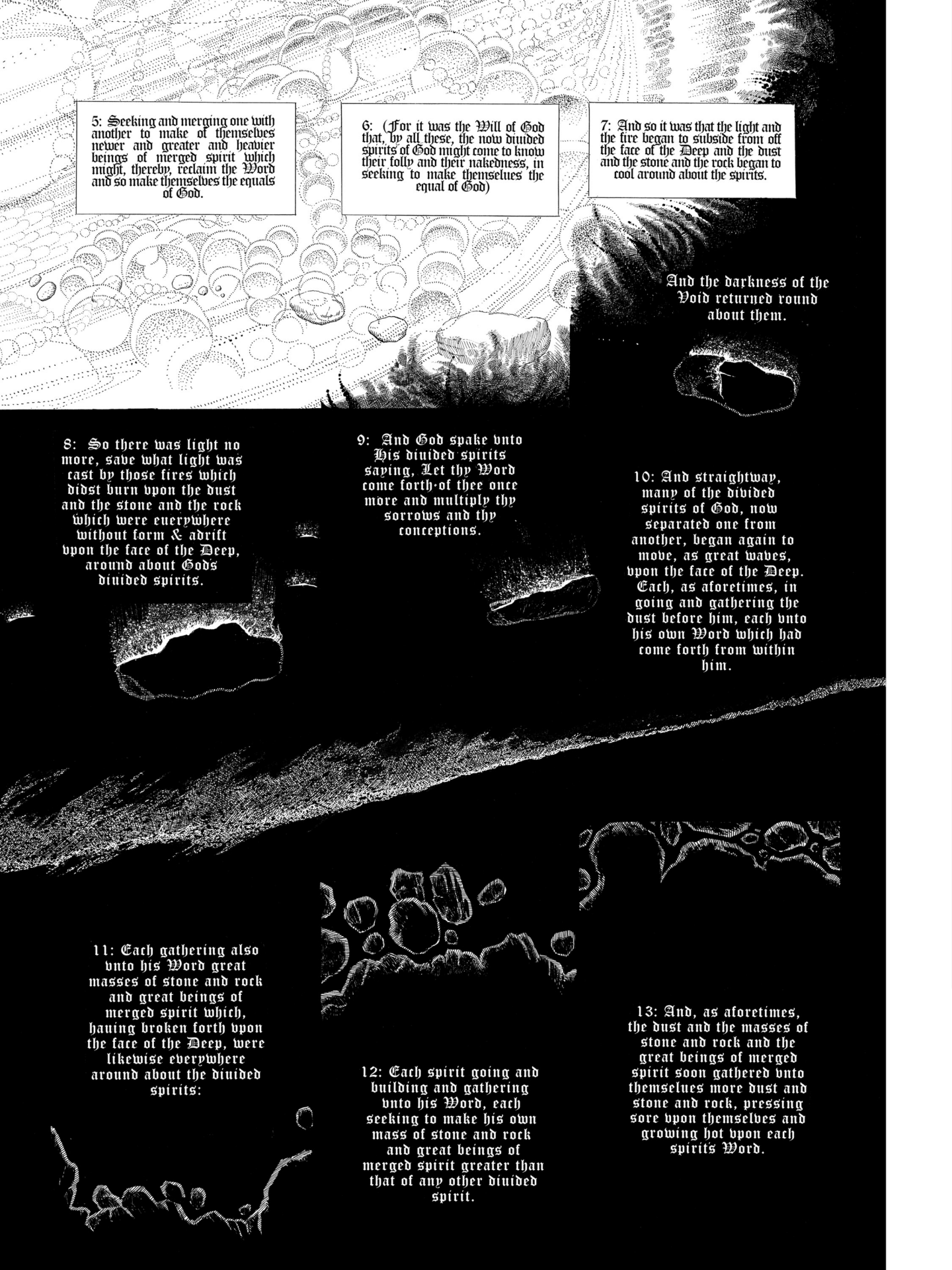
understatement once they saw the fireworks. Recent evidence indicates that the *universe* will continue to expand but, eventually, all the *lights* go out as the seminal energy of the Big Bang exhausts itself.

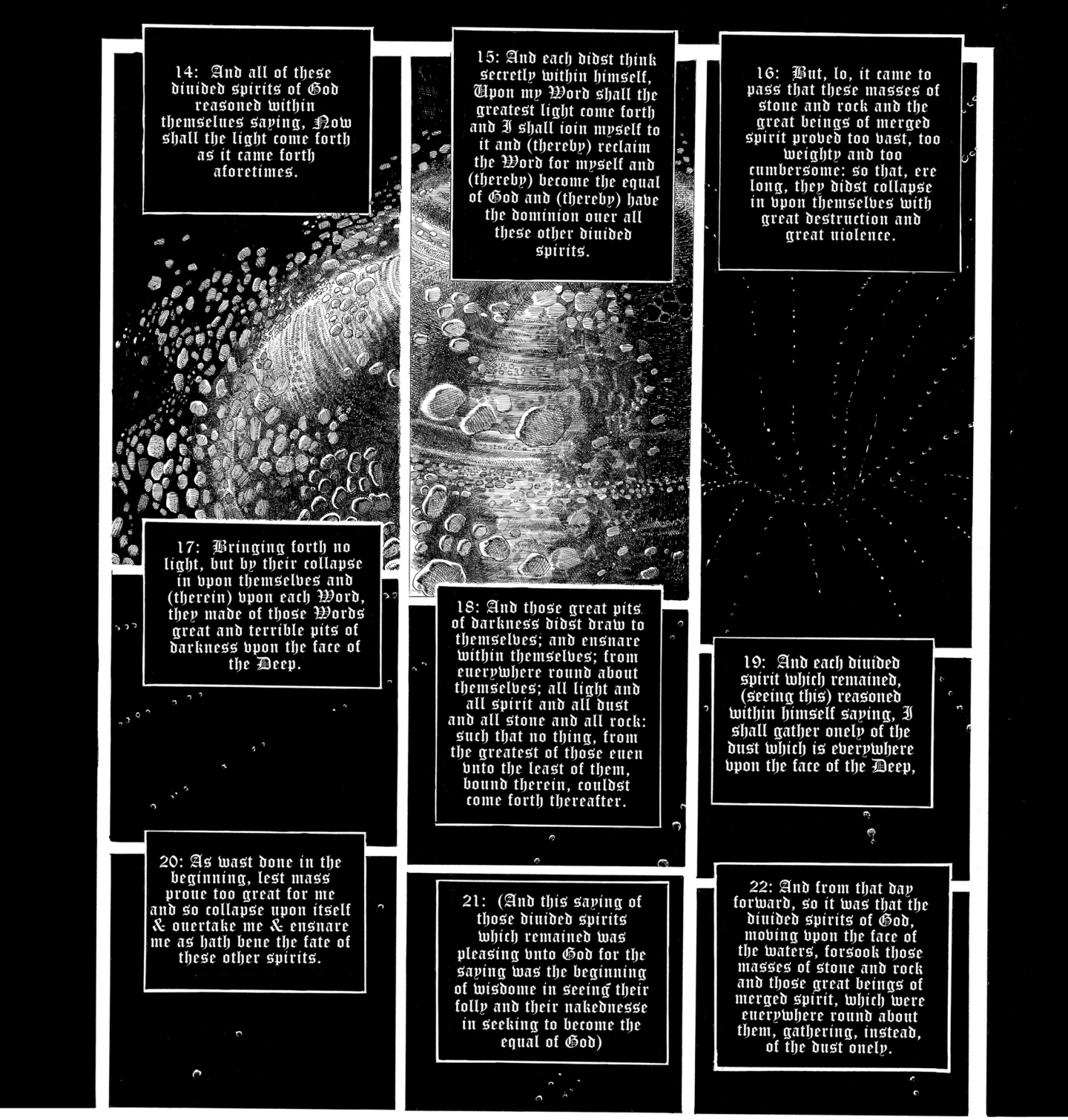
3:3 – See previous footnote. Although conventional thought holds that the Big Bang was an enormous act of violence, I think that's insulting to God's omniscience, omnipotence and *mercy*. I assume that God engineered what His spirit was *nudging* Him about: a model of reality in which His spirit had an absolute co-equal. A model which God, being God ("Equal, you want? Equal you shall have"), balanced down to the last molecule and micro-millimeter in every frame of reference possible: magnetic field, gravitation, weak nuclear force, strong nuclear force, dust, rock, stone, fire, spirit, light, spin, anti-spin, rotation. God's spirit's question being, Why is that not a good idea? God's answer being "Because it makes a big boom." Considering that the Big Bang was just a *scale model* of what would have happened if God had brought forth His own equal and joined himself to it, I think God has a point. (And I think it indicative of the nature of God's spirit that *his* reaction to the Big Bang, along with "the light," was: WOW! I gotta make me one of those! And that neither of their ambitions has been satisfied or even curtailed by their nearly infinite number of failures over the course of the ensuing 13 billion years.

***Bang!* (darn.) *Foomp!* (nuts.) *Whomp!* (dammit.)**

3:4 –*"The spate of element building in the early Universe lasted a little more than three minutes. By this time all neutrinos that had existed after the first second were locked mainly inside nuclei of helium-4 with some smaller amounts in deuterium and helium-3 and still smaller amounts in lithium-7. The relative abundances of the lightest nuclei, hydrogen, deuterium, helium and lithium, from which the present universe would evolve were now fixed. However, it would be another 300,000 years before atoms could form, when the universe would have cooled to some 3000 degrees and the nuclei could at last capture electrons and keep them in orbit."* (Christine Sutton, *Spaceship Neutrino*)

I think God knew that if everything just went "Boom," His spirit (or, knowing women, more probably "the light") would object that His spirit had been *right in the middle* of building some really big, really interesting chemistry experiments which would have created a lot of amazing co-equal and joined beings and God just *blew them all up for spite* because God was *jealous* of His spirit's *scientific brilliance*. I think God also knew that a little over a hundred naturally-occurring elements would make for a more-than-sufficiently-large "chemistry set" for His spirit's purposes (once you factor in all the possible isotopes which could be made at super-high temperatures in the heart of a star). I'm reasonably certain that God maximized the balance of the Big Bang perfectly in no small part so that all of His spirits' little "merging" chemistry experiments (without so much as a single crack in a single beaker or, even, a single test tube) went flying out in every direction, where (as has obviously been the case) His spirit would have nothing but space and time to work on them.


5: Seeking and merging one with another to make of themselves newer and greater and heavier beings of merged spirit which might, thereby, reclaim the Word and so make themselves the equals of God.
6: (For it was the Will of God that, by all these, the now diuided spirits of God might come to know their folly and their nakedness, in seeking to make themselues the equal of God)
7: And so it was that the light and the fire began to subside from off the face of the Deep and the dust and the stone and the rock began to cool around about the spirits.
And the darkness of the Void returned round about them.
8: So there was light no more, save what light was cast by those fires which didst burn vpon the dust and the stone and the rock which were everywhere without form & adrift vpon the face of the Deep, around about Gods diuided spirits.
9: And God spake vnto His diuided spirits saying, Let thy Word come forth of thee once more and multiply thy sorrows and thy conceptions.
10: And straightway, many of the divided spirits of God, now separated one from another, began again to move, as great waves, vpon the face of the Deep. Each, as aforetimes, in going and gathering the dust before him, each vnto his own Word which had come forth from within him.
11: Each gathering also vnto his Word great masses of stone and rock and great beings of merged spirit which, hauing broken forth vpon the face of the Deep, were likewise everywhere around about the diuided spirits:
12: Each spirit going and building and gathering vnto his Word, each seeking to make his own mass of stone and rock and great beings of merged spirit greater than that of any other diuided spirit.
13: And, as aforetimes, the dust and the masses of stone and rock and the great beings of merged spirit soon gathered vnto themselues more dust and stone and rock, pressing sore vpon themselves and growing hot vpon each spirits Word.



3:16-21 – Quasars ("quasi-stellar radio sources") *"The farther out the quasar is, the farther back in time the light reaching us was emitted. That few quasars of the largest redshifts are found indicates that we are seeing back to the instant when the first quasars were formed—somewhat over 10 billion years ago* [i.e. the aftermath of the Big Bang]. *Though for a long time, quasars all seemed farther than the farthest galaxies, new methods of detecting galaxies have found them still farther out...Astronomers now agree that giant black holes are probably present in the centers of quasars."* (Jay M. Pasachoff, *Stars and Planets*)

What I'm driving at, here, is that this huge region of giant black holes at the outer edge of the known universe were the result of the *first* attempts by God's spirit to imitate God's Big Bang which (given the nature of His spirit) started with the assumption that what was needed was Big! Big! Big! raw materials. The exact number of quasars (if that can ever be determined) would tell us the extent to which God's spirit is a slow learner (or "educationally challenged," if you prefer).

I think it was an unfortunate choice of term for Stephen Hawking to describe all of these black holes—where the curvature of space-time is so exaggerated that space-time, in all practical terms, comes to an end—as "singularities" (although I'm sure God's spirit thought the term was a *great* idea: since it made all his failures sound like a series of triumphs). If you have billions upon billions of them, they're *not* (whatever *else* they might be) "singularities".

3:22 – This is my best speculation on the origins of the mysterious dark matter – *"To account for the orbital velocities of stars and gas in* [spiral] *galaxies, the galaxies must be surrounded by a spherical region, or halo, of non-luminous matter, extending at least ten times further than the visible disc of the galaxy...similar dynamical arguments about the motion of 'super-clusters' of galaxies introduce additional dark matter and lead to an estimate of the overall density of the Universe of 20 per cent the critical density...if we extrapolate back in time—working from a present density that is 20 per cent of the critical density—we find that the original density must have been very close to the critical density; indeed so close as to be within 50 decimal places of the critical density! It seems remarkable that the Universe should have originated with what cosmologists call such 'fine tuning'."* (Christine Sutton, *Spaceship Neutrino)*

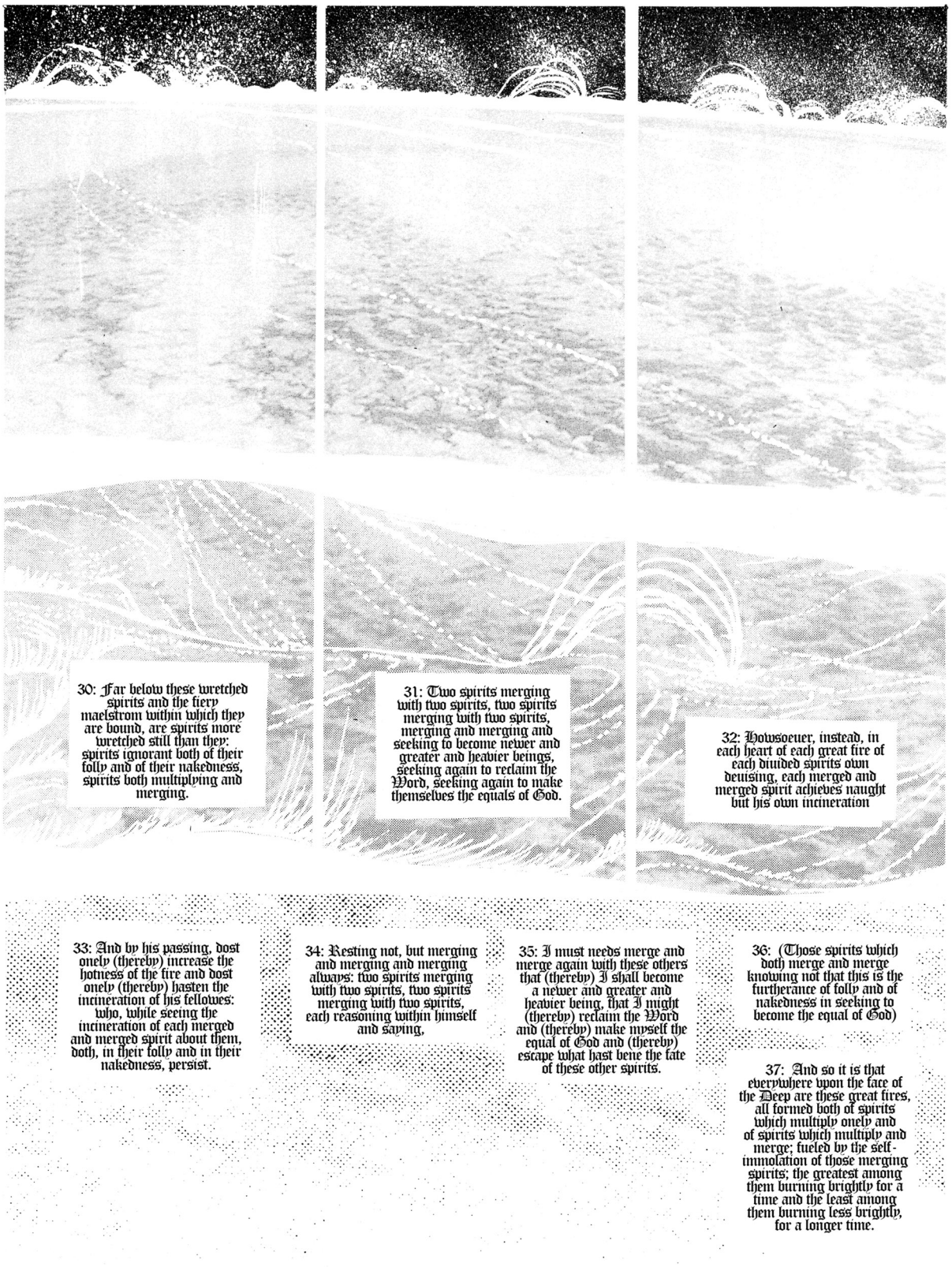
What cosmologists call 'fine tuning' and what the faithful call God.
No, seriously, people. Within *50 decimal places?*
All the scientists sing: Yes! What *a happy accident* that *was!*

3:23 - At this point, I'm more comfortable using conventional terminology, like "great fire" and "a small light," now that we're past the Big Bang.

3:25 – Hydrogen and helium respectively.

3:26-27 – The outer part of a star: the chromosphere and photosphere which are largely composed of hydrogen. It takes 100,000 years for a particle to move from the core to the surface of the sun. I think the evidence better supports the view that—through most of the sun's history in its "main sequence"—particles *don't* go from the core to the surface and, instead, there are two "convection systems" inside the sun: the outer, lighter, hydrogen-based "convection system" and the inner, heavier, helium-based "convection system".

3:28-29 – Solar prominences, the huge arcs of flame, hundreds of thousands of miles wide and hundreds of thousands of miles high—which are expelled from the sun's surface and then are drawn back to it, which are hotter than the sun's interior and which are visible in the sun's corona



during a solar eclipse.

That is, I don't think "the divided spirits" which are multiplying inside the stars have achieved any greater measure of sophistication than Lucifer had when, after sinking into the primordial fire, he decided that God had, unjustifiably, cast him into hell. His multiplying descendants still join themselves to their great fires and, I'm sure, still beg God to have mercy on them. Sad bunch, really.

3:30-36 – The inner part of a star: the core, which is largely composed of helium. This is where the process of converting hydrogen into helium takes place, generating phenomenal amounts of energy at the stage where protons and deuterons form Helium-3. [see Hard science note for 2:21. Or don't. Suit yourself.]

3:37 – The largest stars (I believe Betelgeuse is still the largest known star, the undisputed, reigning champion of "It's Better to Burn Out Than to Fade Away," so I'm sure he'll be pleased that I mentioned him) have shorter lives, but burn the brightest. The smallest stars have the longest lives. The sun is in between these two extremes.

38: And most of these great fires are brought forth by the diuided spirits in tandem: two spirits bringing forth vpon two Words, seeking to make them equal and ioined for all time.

39: And these great fires, in tandem, do burn brightly for a time, passing between them their multiplying spirits. But always one fire is greater than the other and not one pair ever is equal and no pair ever is ioined.

40: (This truth, That no great fires which are brought forth in tandem are equal, and no pair of them ever is ioined, is the furtherance of wisdome in seeing the folly & the nakedness of seeking to become the equal of God)

41: And these great fires are called stars, which so fill the heavens that they cannot be numbered for multitude, being more numerous than the sands upon the seashore and (thereby) bearing witness vnto the folly & the nakedness of God's diuided spirits.

42: For though the journey is ten times ten thousand years, each spirit which doeth onely multiply doeth make ten times ten thousand journeys from the bottommost vnto the topmost layer of the great fire which he hath brought forth of his own deuising.

43: And of a truth, there is no spirit which doeth multiply onely. For within each fire, from the greatest vnto the least of them, vnto each spirit which, heretofore, hath multiplied onely, there comes the time when that spirit must merge with other spirits and journey no more vnto that topmost layer but, instead, be drawn down and in, within the hottest of the fire; drawn nigh, at last, vnto the Word.

Chapter the Fourth

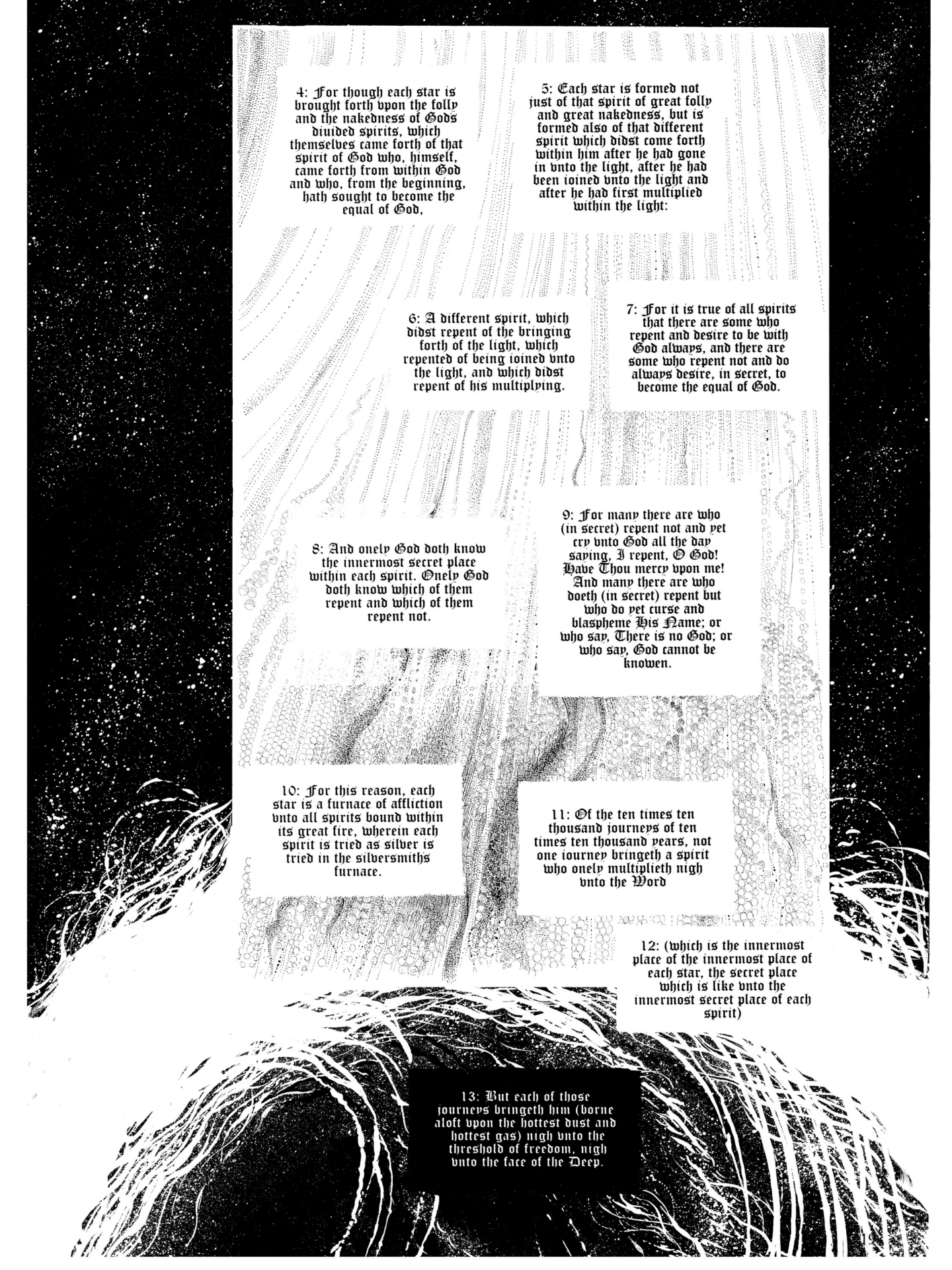
Know ye this, as well, O Cerebus: that the sun which doth warm the earth and which bringeth forth light and, by that light, bringeth forth life vpon the earth is one of these great fires which are called stars.

2: Thy sun is neither the greatest of the stars, nor the least of them, neither the brightest nor the dullest, neither is thy sun an innermost star about which many stars revolve nor an outermost star far apart from his fellowes.

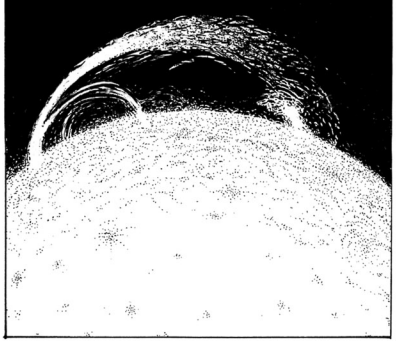
3: Howsoeuer, know ye as well, O Cerebus, that each star, from the greatest among them vnto the least of them, is equally precious in the sight of God.

3:38-40 – ***"When we look at the sky, most of the stars we see seem to be single points of light. But more detailed investigation has revealed that most of the stars in our galaxy are actually in double star systems—systems containing two or more stars. The periods with which the components of double star systems orbit each other range from hours up through centuries."*** **(Jay M. Pasachoff, *Stars and Planets*)**

3:43 – **That is, all hydrogen in a star will, ultimately, be converted to helium either in the "main sequence" of the star's life or in the "helium flash" (a star's menopausal hot flash) in the course of going nova.**


4: For though each star is brought forth vpon the folly and the nakedness of Gods diuided spirits, which themselves came forth of that spirit of God who, himself, came forth from within God and who, from the beginning, hath sought to become the equal of God,
5: Each star is formed not just of that spirit of great folly and great nakedness, but is formed also of that different spirit which didst come forth within him after he had gone in vnto the light, after he had been ioined vnto the light and after he had first multiplied within the light:
6: A different spirit, which didst repent of the bringing forth of the light, which repented of being ioined vnto the light, and which didst repent of his multiplying.
7: For it is true of all spirits that there are some who repent and desire to be with God always, and there are some who repent not and do always desire, in secret, to become the equal of God.
8: And onely God doth know the innermost secret place within each spirit. Onely God doth know which of them repent and which of them repent not.
9: For many there are who (in secret) repent not and yet cry vnto God all the day saying, I repent, O God! Have Thou mercy vpon me! And many there are who doeth (in secret) repent but who do yet curse and blaspheme His Name; or who say, There is no God; or who say, God cannot be knowen.
10: For this reason, each star is a furnace of affliction vnto all spirits bound within its great fire, wherein each spirit is tried as silver is tried in the silversmiths furnace.
11: Of the ten times ten thousand journeys of ten times ten thousand years, not one iourney bringeth a spirit who onely multiplieth nigh vnto the Word
12: (which is the innermost place of the innermost place of each star, the secret place which is like vnto the innermost secret place of each spirit)
13: But each of those journeys bringeth him (borne aloft vpon the hottest dust and hottest gas) nigh vnto the threshold of freedom, nigh vnto the face of the Deep.

14: And, of a truth, not until all merged spirits hast bene incinerated wilt those spirits which multiply onely come nigh vnto the Word.



15: And when those spirits which doth multiply onely, at last, cometh nigh vnto the Word, most are ensnared by the Word and soon thereafter crushed in vpon the Word in a great pit of darkness neuermore, thereafter, to come forth; neuermore, thereafter, to come nigh vnto the threshold of freedom; neuermore, thereafter, to gaze vpon the face of the Deep.

16: And of those spirits which doth multiply and merge none (in ten times ten thousand journeys of ten times ten thousand years) cometh nigh vnto that threshold of freedom and, in all those years and in all those journeys, not once doth a spirit which doth multiply and merge gaze vpon the face of the Deep.

17: But, instead, each iourney bringeth that spirit nigh vnto the Word. Merging and merging, growing greater and greater still, seeking always to reclaim the Word which is just beyond that spirits grasp, seeking always to become the equal of God.

19: Knowing not, each time that spirit draweth nigh vnto Word, which occasion it might be that shall bring about incineration, like that incineration which hath been the fate of most all who haue gone before and of most all who shall come after.

18: Ten times ten thousand journeys each of ten times ten thousand years, knowing naught else but merging and grasping and seeking to become the equal of God,

20: For most all of these spirits there is no rest and no relief from their torment, bound within the fiery maelstroms which are the stars. All burdened with great heaviness, all multiplying, all bringing forth their conceptions in sorrow.

21: And when all spirits haue at last merged and have at last been incinerated, so there is no more fuel for the great fire, naught is left but a few great and heauy and incombustible spirits, now fearing greatly, still merging and merging, now three vpon three vpon three.

22: Some crying vnto God and saying, Haue mercy vpon Thy diuided spirits and some cursing and blaspheming His Name.

23: Supplicant and blasphemer alike soon becoming too dense and too cumbersome and, so, collapsing in vpon themselves and vpon the Word.

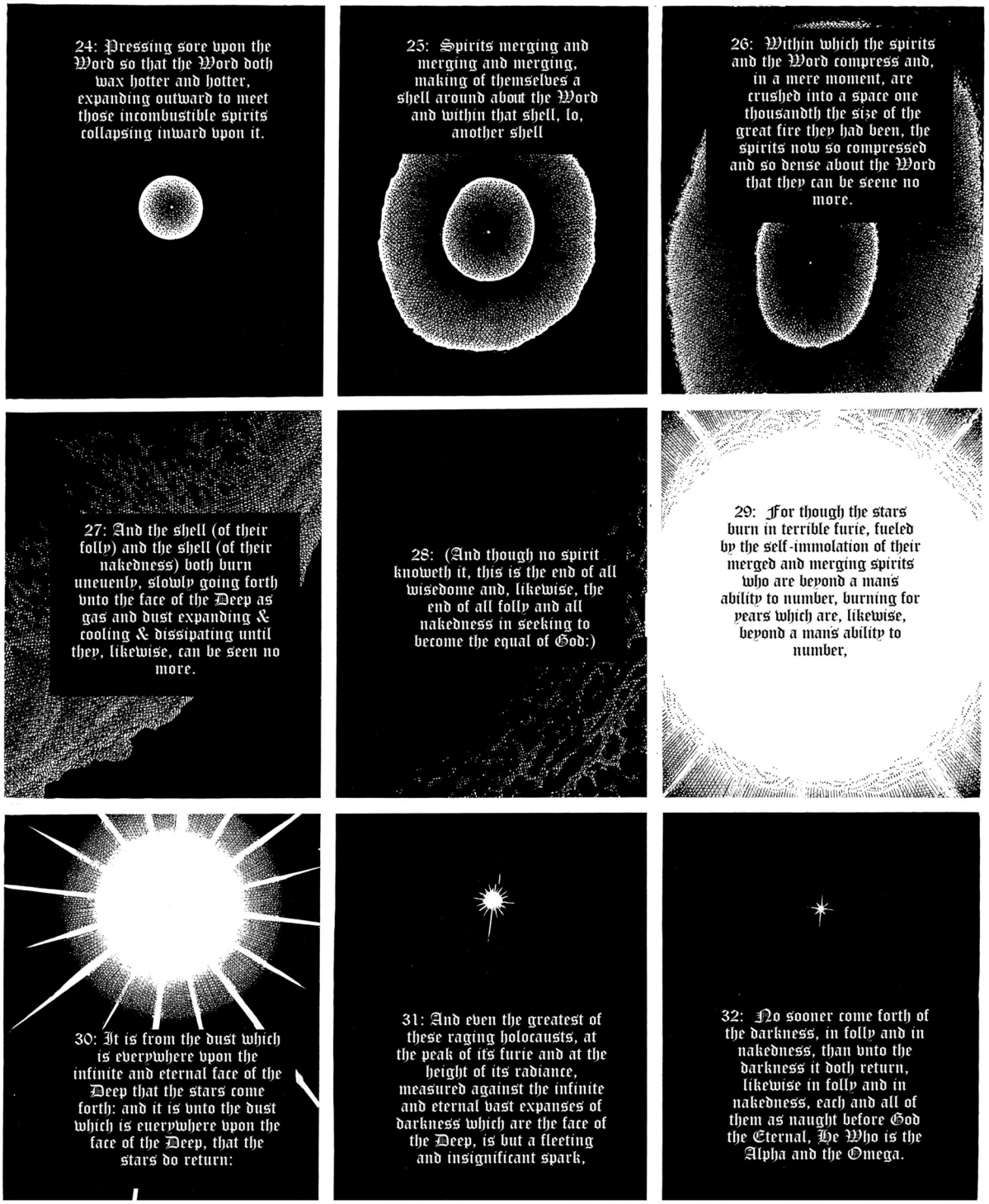
4:11-14 – Hydrogen atoms cycle through the chromosphere and the photosphere, out to the corona where they form the spicules, the solar prominences and solar flares. Although the ratio of hydrogen to helium is 9:1, helium outweighs hydrogen 4:1, so the actual ratio of the outer hydrogen "convection system" within the sun to the inner helium "convection system" within the sun (by *abundance*, which is the frame of reference used by scientists) is 7:3. So the "journey" of "ten times ten thousand years" is actually "seven times ten thousand years". Which, because it just doesn't have the same "ring" to it, I decided not to use. Once the inner helium "convection system" of the sun has been used up, the remaining hydrogen of the outer hydrogen "convection system" gets its turn to be made into helium in the *triple alpha process*, a last-ditch attempt to "reclaim the Word" which brings all the hydrogen "nigh unto the Word," that is, into the innermost core of the sun.

4:15 –Physics tells us that our sun won't become a *black hole*, it will become a *white dwarf* star: a star which (in the frame of reference I'm constructing here) is "all Word". A "Word" which still exists in our conventional perceptions of space-time but which (because it possesses such a profound field of gravitation) differs only marginally from the nature of a black hole in that, ultimately, *everything in our solar system (including virtually every human soul)* will end its existence being "crushed against" the white dwarf that our sun will become. That is, nothing—no matter or light (or spirit, I suspect)—which presently exists anywhere within the billions upon billions of square miles between Mercury and Pluto will be able to escape.

As Tony Curtis and Marilyn Monroe said in *Some Like It Hot*, "Makes a girl think." Or, maybe it doesn't.

4:16-20 – The life of a helium atom. Taking the 7:3 ratio, the journey of a helium atom from the bottom of the photosphere to the sun's core is "*three* times ten thousand years," again just not having the same "ring" to it, I decided to stick with "*ten* times."

4:21-23 – "...starting in about 3 billion years...while the outer layers of the Sun are enlarging, the core of the Sun will be collapsing inward which will raise the central temperature and pressure. By about 5 billion years from now, the core will have risen from its current 15 million degrees to



about 100 million degrees. At that point, helium atoms will begin to fuse together three at a time, first making beryllium, then carbon. This is known as the triple alpha process and it produces what is known as the helium flash, because the process commences very rapidly and exhausts itself in such a short time interval, as short as a few seconds for some stars." **(Leon Golub & Jay M. Pasachoff, *Nearest Star*)**

4:24-25 – ***"The energy from the helium flash will expand the Sun's core. Because it then gives off less energy for a while after the flash ends, the outer layers will shrink again. At this time, helium will fuse into carbon in the core in a steady fashion. Outside the resulting core of carbon, shells of fusing helium and, farther out, fusing hydrogen, will exist. This stage will last a few hundred million years."*** **(ibid)**

4:26 –*"The core of this remnant Sun will cool and contract, until the electrons inside it cannot be pushed together any more by the gravity of the remnant's mass. Our Sun will then be an Earth-sized star, of the type known as a white dwarf, and will end its life in this way, slowly cooling until the end of time."* **(ibid)**

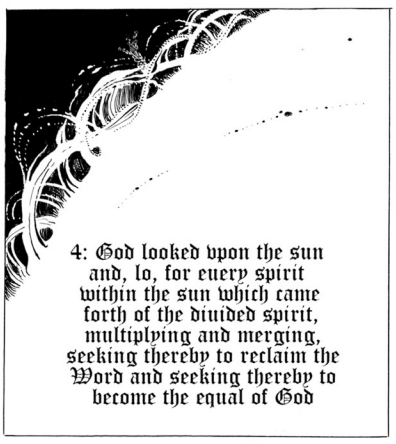
4:27–32 - ***"The shells of fusing hydrogen and helium will burn unstably, causing pulsations that continually increase in strength, and the stellar wind will increase by a billion times, carrying out large quantities of material into interstellar space. The material carried out, whether by pulsing or by the unstable solar wind, will drift away from the Sun. As the out-flowing wind increases in strength and speed, new material will catch up with the old, piling up the material in shells around the Sun. We see hundreds of such stars in the sky. They are known as planetary nebulas, though the word "planetary" means only that...they are the clouds of gas around dying stars that were once like our Sun. Images taken by the Hubble Space Telescope show the many different forms that planetary nebulas can take, depending on the details of the irregular pulsing of the gas and on whether or not there are directional jets of gas present, aligned to the stars' original spin axes. The planetary nebula stage of the Sun's future will last only about 1,000 years, a snap of a finger in the Sun's 10-billion-year overall lifetime. After that time, the gas surrounding the star will expand and cool so much that it will be invisible. It will carry the carbon and other elements out into space."*** **(ibid)**

Chapter the Fifth

And know ye as well, O Cerebus, that from the beginning, when the great fire which is thy sun was not yet come forth, in that time when the heat and the light were everywhere vpon the face of the Deep

2: God looked vpon the diuided spirit vpon whose Word the sun wouldst one day come forth and God knew that diuided spirit didst secretly repent of his multiplying and didst secretly repent of his merging.

3: So that when that diuided spirit had brought forth his great fire and had gone in vnto it and had ioined himself vnto it and had, therein, begun to multiply

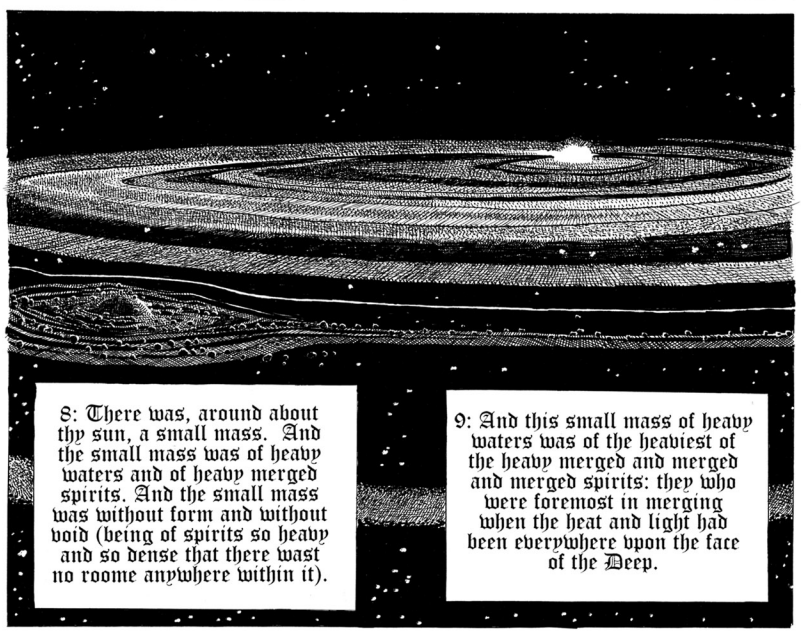


4: God looked vpon the sun and, lo, for euery spirit within the sun which came forth of the diuided spirit, multiplying and merging, seeking thereby to reclaim the Word and seeking thereby to become the equal of God

5: For every one of those sort, which came forth of the diuided spirit, fully nine spirits came forth which didst multiply onely.

6: (And this wast pleasing vnto God for, of a truth, it is easier for a spirit to repent which doth multiply onely, than for a spirit to repent, which doth multiply and merge)

7: And when thy sun didst come forth from the dust which the diuided spirit didst gather around about his Word,

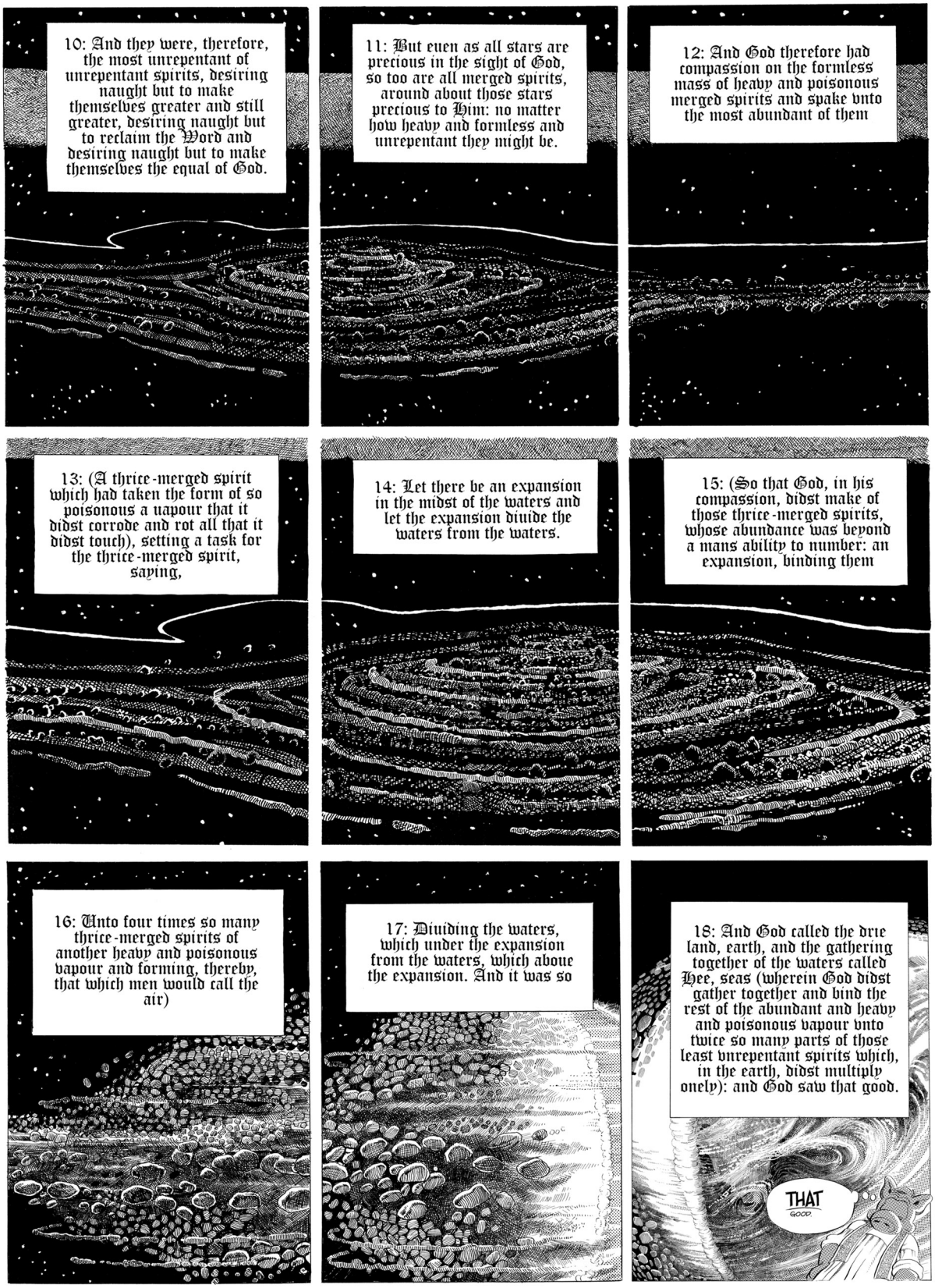


8: There was, around about thy sun, a small mass. And the small mass was of heavy waters and of heavy merged spirits. And the small mass was without form and without void (being of spirits so heavy and so dense that there wast no roome anywhere within it).

9: And this small mass of heavy waters was of the heaviest of the heavy merged and merged and merged spirits: they who were foremost in merging when the heat and light had been everywhere vpon the face of the Deep.

5:5 – Again, the 9:1 ratio of hydrogen to helium in our sun.

5:8-12 – Unlike the sun—which is composed of the two *lightest* elements, hydrogen (atomic number of one; one proton in its nucleus) and helium (atomic number of two; two protons in its nucleus)—the earth is composed, primarily, of *heavy* elements, oxygen (atomic number 8), silicon (atomic number 14), magnesium (atomic number 12) and iron (atomic number 26). All of these had to have been formed (in the context I'm attempting to construct here) of "unrepentant spirits"—spirits actively joining with each other as long as it was possible to do so—in the aftermath of the Big Bang.



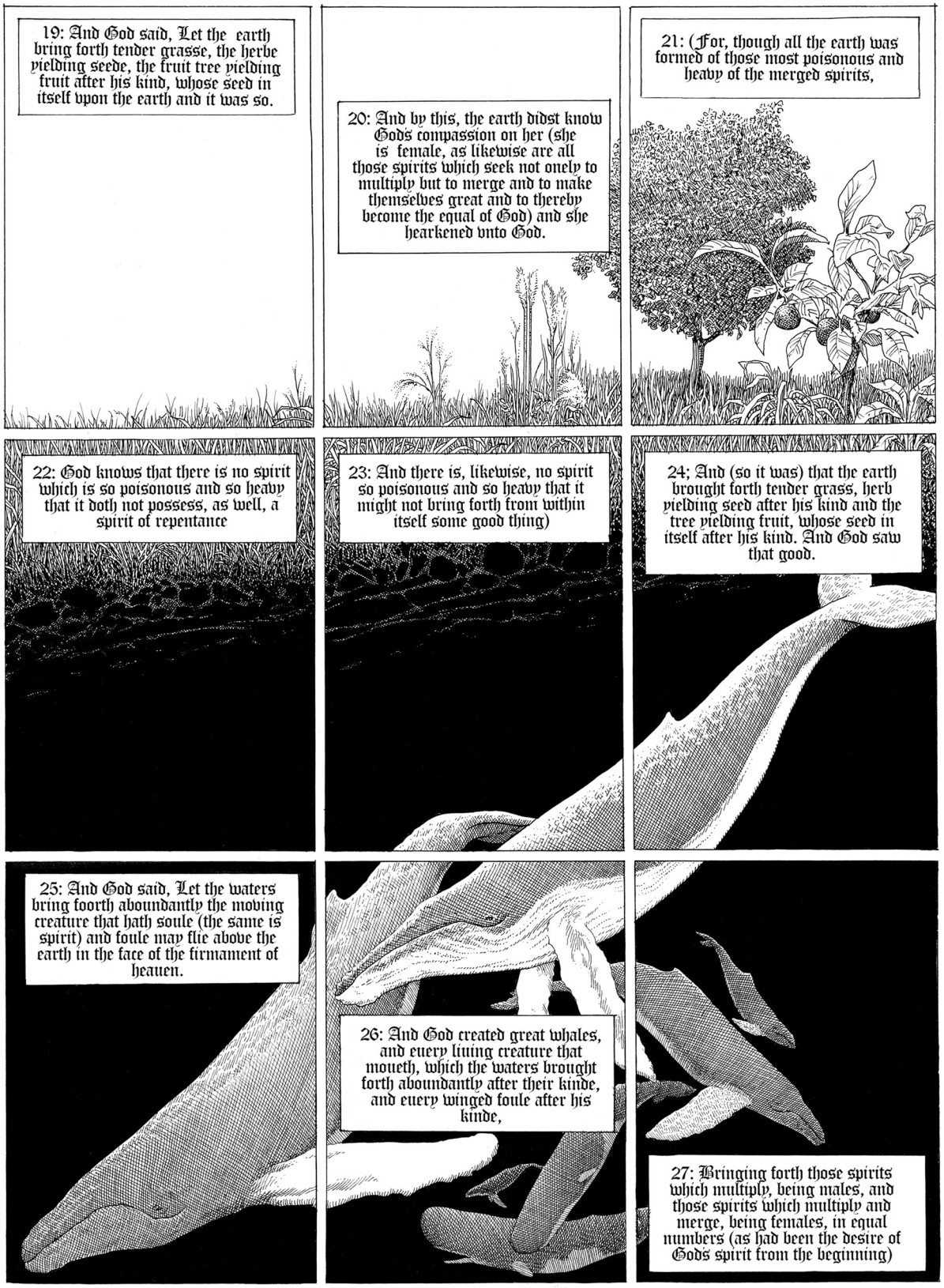
5:13 – Oxygen. The ability of oxygen to rust and corrode untreated metals in a matter of mere weeks, in a cosmological context where most "trans-formational events" are measured in millions of years, makes oxygen, in a relative sense, the sulfuric acid of gases.

5:14 – *Genesis* 1:6

5:16 – Nitrogen (atomic number 7). It makes up four-fifths of the air we breathe. I have no idea if nitrogen is as "poisonous" as oxygen (see note above), but seven protons in your nucleus meant you were "joining pretty good" after the Big Bang.

5:17 – *Genesis* 1:7

5:18 – *Genesis* 1:10 (water is, of course, two parts hydrogen and one part oxygen. Since hydrogen has only one proton in its nucleus, I think I'm safe in calling it the "least unrepentant" element)



5:19 – *Genesis* 1:11

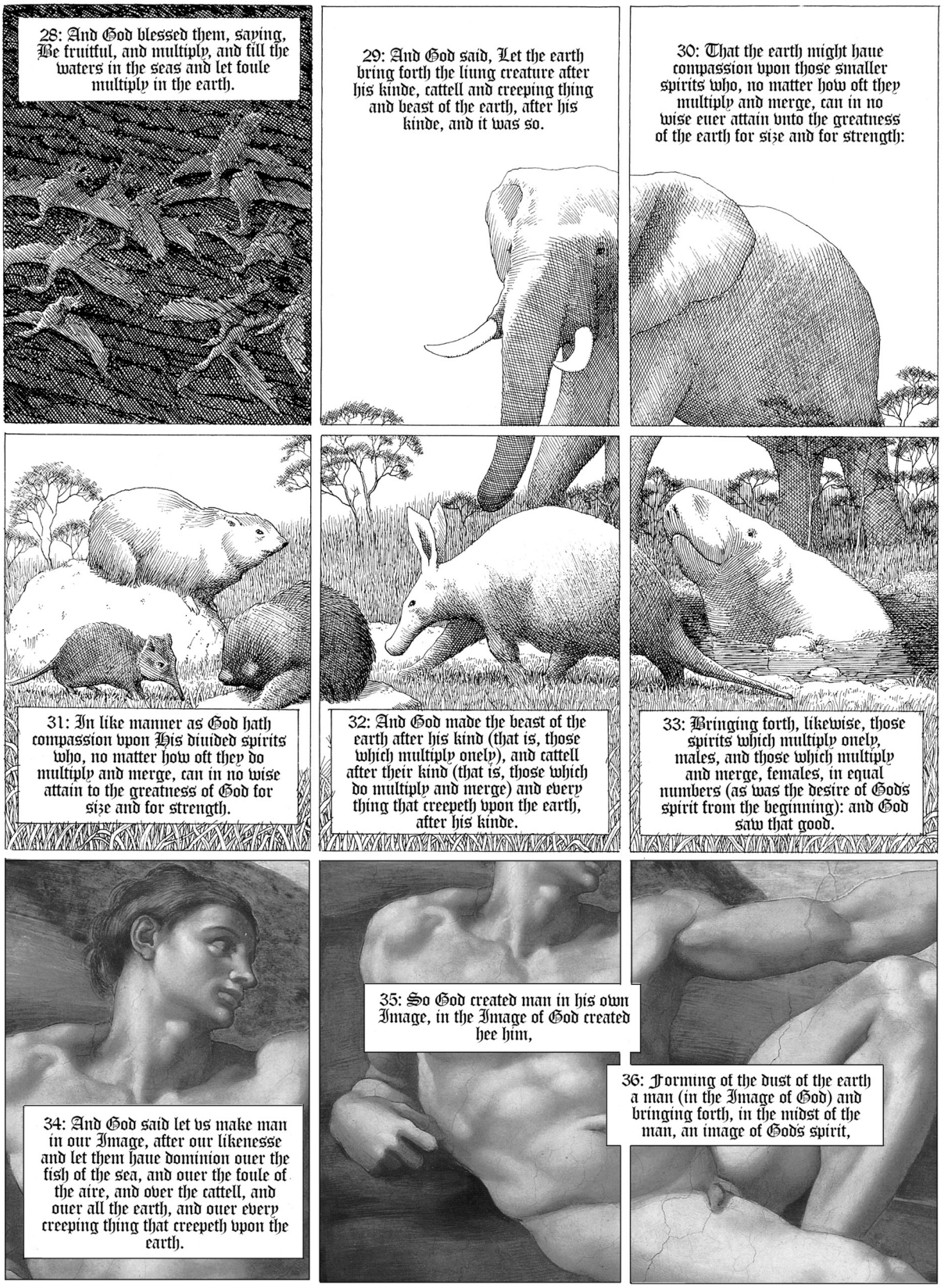
5:20 – Misogyny? Or hard logic. I forget what comic strip it was, but someone had depicted a female college student who was going to do her thesis on "Sexism in Nature". I laughed and laughed.

5:24 – *Genesis* 1:12

5:25 –*Genesis* 1:20. To say that soul is the same as spirit is definitely speculation on my part. Spirit and soul might be interchangeable or their relationship might be analogous to the relationship between mind and brain, or analogous to the relationship between mind and thought or analogous to the relationship between mind and Toyota (that is, they might be completely unrelated). *Caveat emptor.*

5:26 – *Genesis* 1:21

5:27 – This numerical equivalency, it seems to me, is extremely underrated by those who deny the existence of God. Do you really suppose that the fact that equal



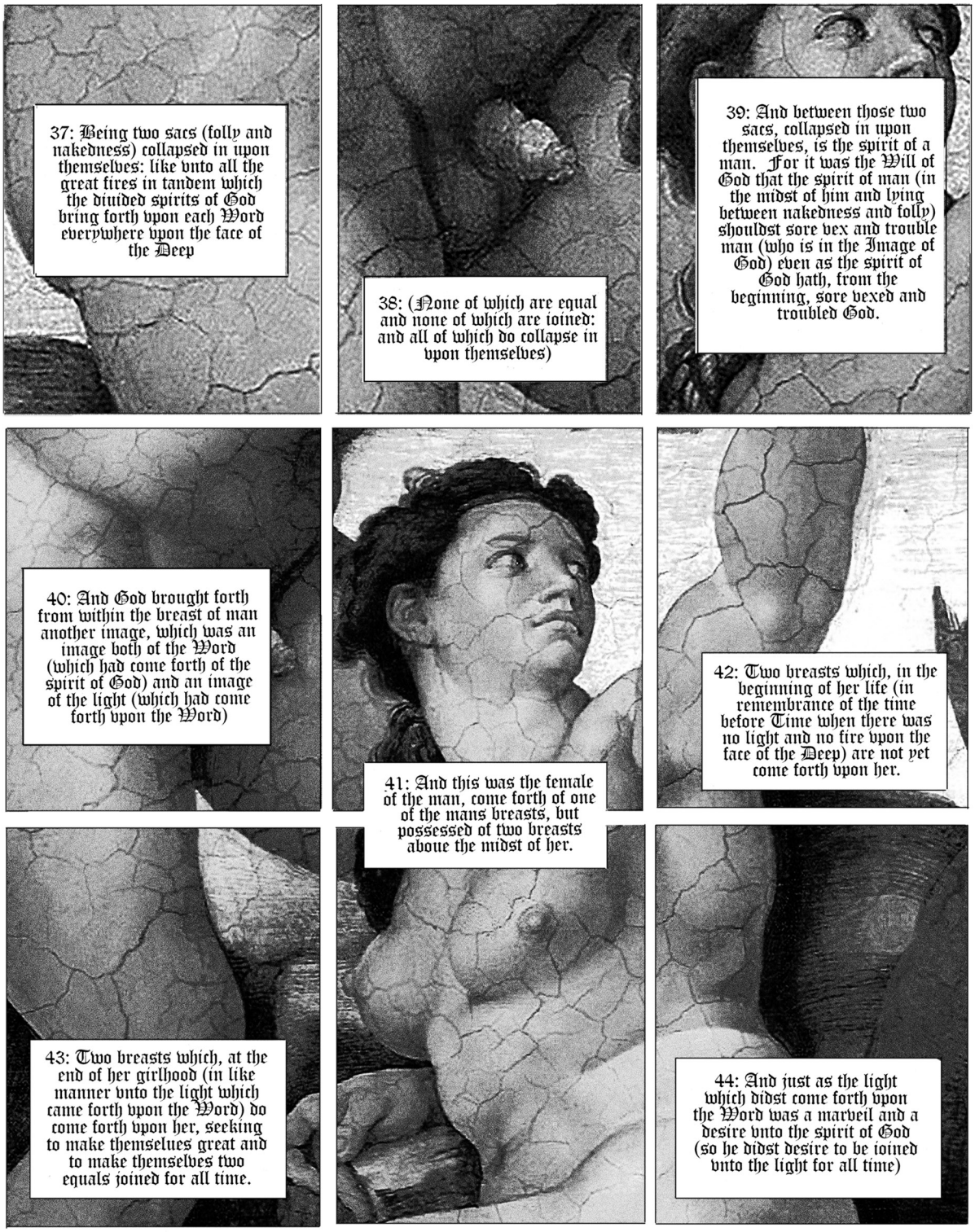
numbers of males and females are born is—like the Big Bang—just another "happy accident"? It seems to me that God has given men and women an equivalent numerical presence in the world so that anyone (willing to look at the evidence through unprejudiced eyes) would recognize the implicit disparity between man's accomplishments (in the Image of God) and women's accomplishments (in the image of the spirit of God, in the image of the light which came forth upon the Word, and in the image of the Word).

5:28 – *Genesis* 1:22 5:29 – *Genesis* 1:24

5:30-31 – A fitting "living metaphor" for the earth to live by, which (it seems to me) was completely lost on her.

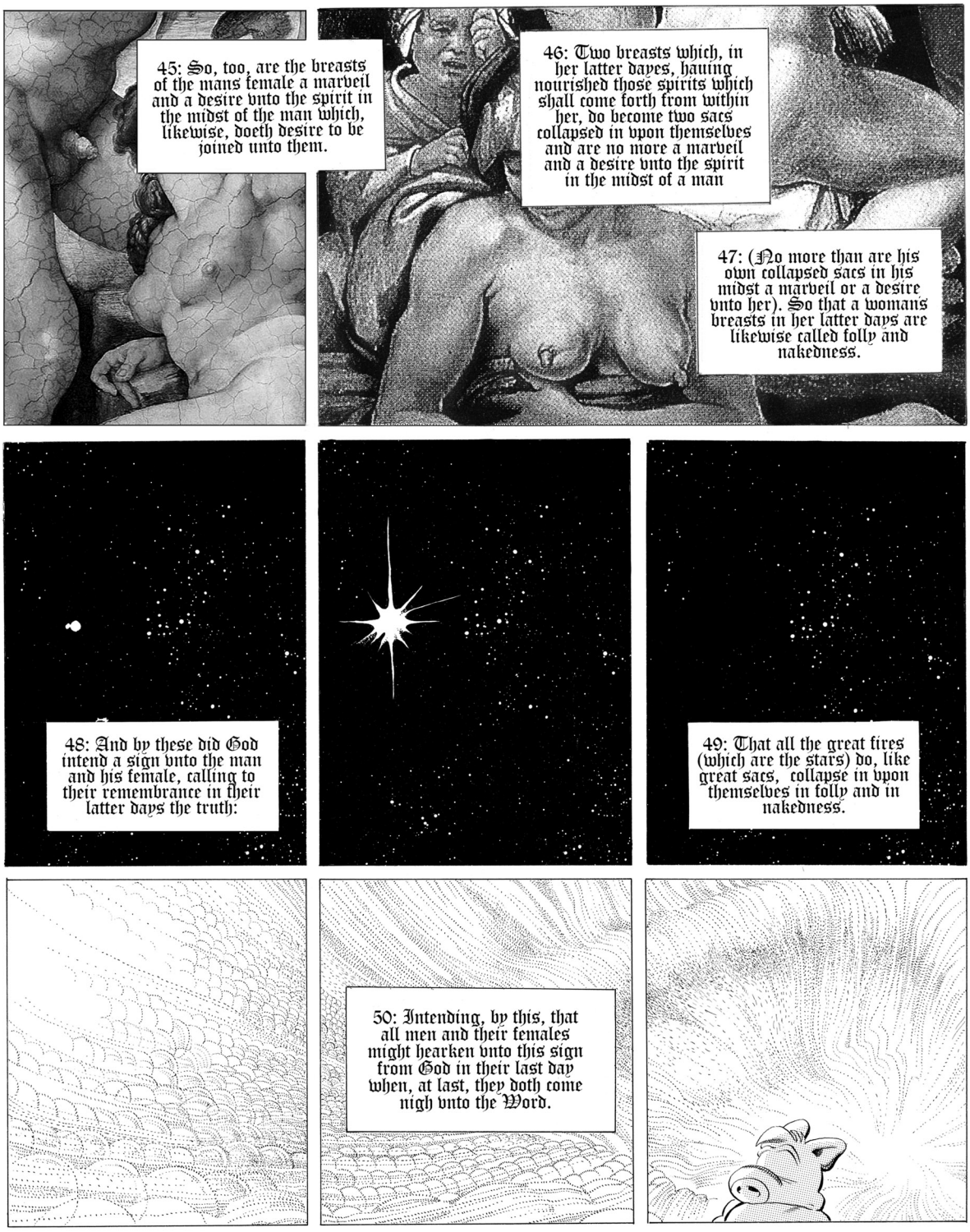
5:32 – *Genesis* 1:25 with my own parenthetical speculations: (The former case, those animals which impregnate their females in a random fashion without entering into an on-going "relationship/marriage" with them) (and the latter case, those animals which mate for life or function in a herd or pack context).

5:34 – *Genesis* 1:26 5:35 – *Genesis* 1:27



5:36-39 – My speculation here is that, although *man-as-a-total-being* was made in *God's* Image, *man's penis* was made in the image of God's *spirit*. Any man's penis (as I would hope, by now, that we could all—whether we are "penis-equipped" or "penile-challenged"—agree) is a potential trouble-maker. Put another way, whatever trouble a man gets himself into or in whatever way a man causes trouble, 99 times out of 100 his penis is the most likely culprit/motivating force. A man's relationship with his penis is, I believe, another "living metaphor" of God's relationship with His spirit. As a man, as long as you keep your penis "in its place" (i.e. in your pants) you're okay. If you start letting your penis call the shots in your life, if you let your penis "get above its place," that's when you're apt to get your name into the wrong kind of newspaper article.

Taking the above as a given, I think, as "living metaphors" go, it only stands to reason that God created woman (basically) as an enlarged counterpart to the man's penis. That is, a woman's size relative to a penis is analogous to the size of "the light" relative to God's spirit (the disparity in size originating in the mandate to create equality—God's spirit having come forth from within God and, thereby, containing more inherent greatness in a smaller "space" than the primordial "light" which was, for want of a better term, "non-deistic" in origin) which is, in turn, analogous to the vastly greater size of the human egg as compared to the size of the human sperm. At essence (as I see it), the ongoing vexatious and troubling relationship, the battle of the sexes, isn't between *men* and women, but rather between *penises* and women. It isn't *men* who desire to "go in unto" women (the way God's spirit desired to "go in unto" the light). It is *penises* that desire to go in unto women. In the relationship between His spirit and the "light," God is pretty much a non-participant. The spirit and "the light" both exist because of God and are, I'm quite certain, precious to Him and (for that reason) He helps where He can with those (meager few) of them who acknowledge His sovereignty, but God isn't about to "go in unto" or "merge" with His spirit or "the light". On the contrary, I believe His whole point in telling His spirit how to bring forth "the light" and how to join



himself to "the light" "for all time" was to demonstrate how unworkable God believes multiplying, merging, co-equality and joining are. I believe man is made in the Image of God and presented with an analogous circumstance: man can choose to be an innocent bystander in the relationship between penises and women, or man can choose to be an active participant. I believe that God believes that the former is the wiser course. Having tried both, I have to go along with God on this one. My penis very fondly desires every waking minute of every waking day to "go in unto" a woman. But, I know that "giving in" to my penis only ensnares me within the ongoing vexatious and troubling relationship between penises and women. It isn't my penis that has to listen to the unnecessary intricacies she multiplies and merges with everywhere in her life. It isn't my penis that has to tip-toe around and through the fragile multiplying and merging eggshells of political correctness. It isn't my penis that has to remember the name of every member of her family, her multitudinous (and usually multiplying) friends, ex-friends, former ex-friends and now friends again; former ex-friends then friends and now...well. You get the idea. No, I'm with God on the "innocent bystander" option.

Darned interesting this women vs. penises business.

I think I'll sit over here and read my newspaper.

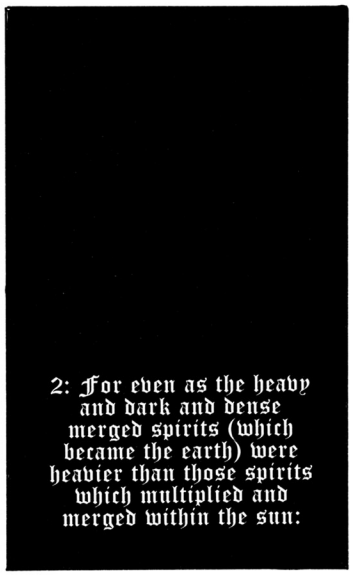
5:40-47 – If you're having trouble picturing a woman as an enlarged counterpart to a penis, it will help if you realize that her breasts are the enlarged counterparts of the man's testicles and scrotum.

The fact that a man's scrotum, from a very early age, consists of two flaccid collapsed sacs, I think, is a "living metaphor" for the fact that God's spirit will never be able to build a Big Bang like God did, nor a binary star system where the two stars are equal and joined—and that all of his attempts to do so are (really) just flaccid sacs of hydrogen and helium in various stages of collapse—and that God's spirit will come to this realization (if he hasn't already) before "the light" does.

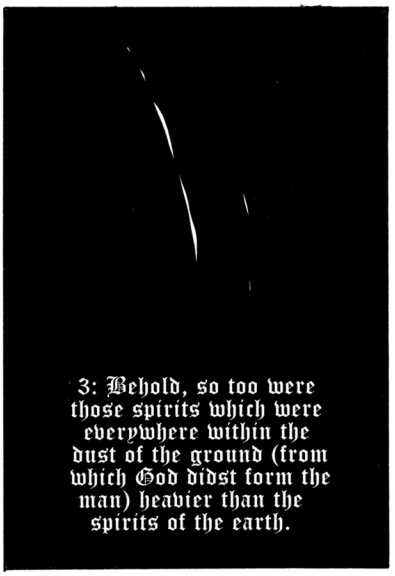
The fact that a woman's breasts become collapsed sacs later in her life, I think, is a "living metaphor" for the fact that "the light" will come to this same realization, albeit later than God's spirit does.

Chapter the Sixth

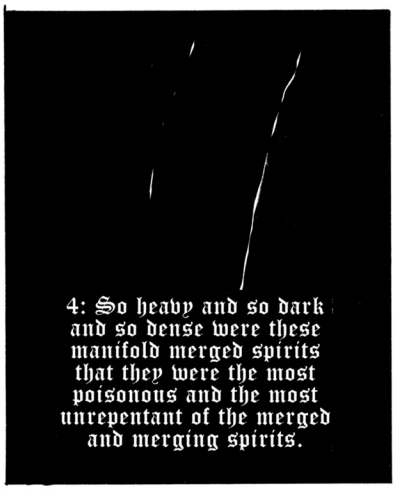
And know ye as well, O Cerebus, that even as God formed man of the dust of the ground, God knew that within that dust was a great legion of heavier and darker and denser merged spirits.



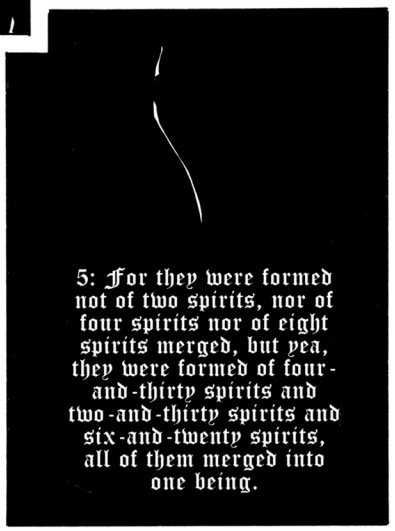
2: For even as the heavy and dark and dense merged spirits (which became the earth) were heavier than those spirits which multiplied and merged within the sun:



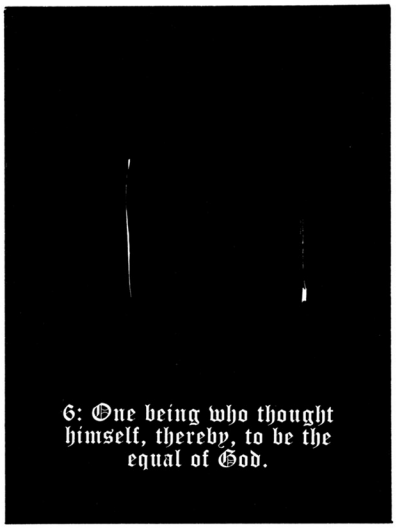
3: Behold, so too were those spirits which were everywhere within the dust of the ground (from which God didst form the man) heavier than the spirits of the earth.



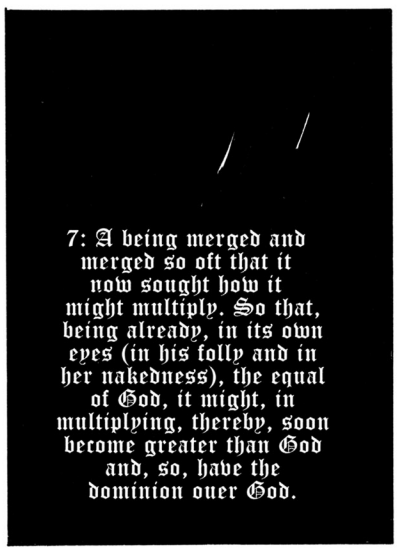
4: So heavy and so dark and so dense were these manifold merged spirits that they were the most poisonous and the most unrepentant of the merged and merging spirits.



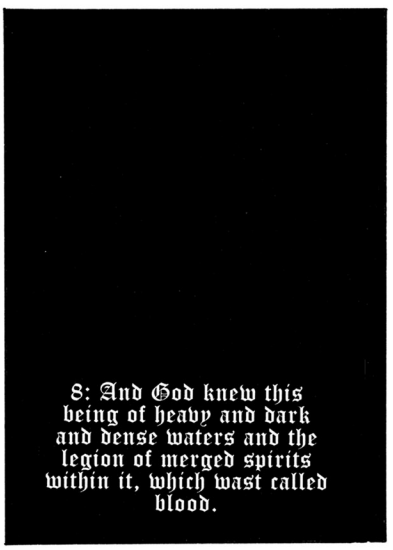
5: For they were formed not of two spirits, nor of four spirits nor of eight spirits merged, but yea, they were formed of four-and-thirty spirits and two-and-thirty spirits and six-and-twenty spirits, all of them merged into one being.



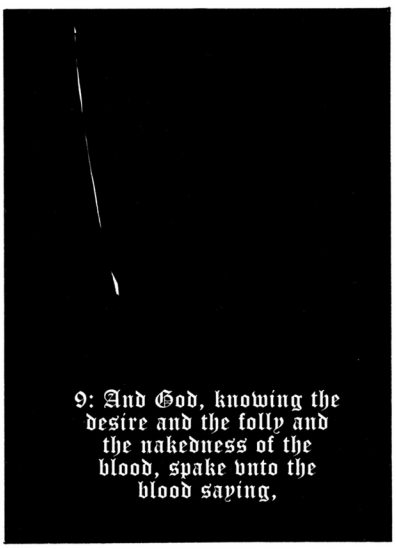
6: One being who thought himself, thereby, to be the equal of God.



7: A being merged and merged so oft that it now sought how it might multiply. So that, being already, in its own eyes (in his folly and in her nakedness), the equal of God, it might, in multiplying, thereby, soon become greater than God and, so, have the dominion ouer God.



8: And God knew this being of heavy and dark and dense waters and the legion of merged spirits within it, which wast called blood.



9: And God, knowing the desire and the folly and the nakedness of the blood, spake vnto the blood saying,

6:8 – Heme (also called hematin)—the insoluble, protein-free, iron-bearing constituent of hemoglobin, the complex (there's an understatement for you) respiratory pigment in red corpuscles—is composed of Carbon (ordinarily 6 protons in its nucleus: here, *34* protons), Hydrogen (ordinarily 1 proton: here *32* protons), Iron (*26* protons), and 4 parts nitrogen and 2 parts oxygen for laughs (oh, sorry, no, that's nitrous oxide which is 2 parts nitrogen and 1 part oxygen). A naturally occurring molecule like heme, in my opinion, would have to have been joining nuclei at a great rate after the Big Bang and probably right up to the last possible moment before the universe cooled down too far for any further joining of nuclei. Which, to me, very much helps to make sense of the Koran's Sura 96, "Clots of Blood" which was the first Sura revealed to Muhammad, the first two lines of which are: "*Recite thou in the name of thy Lord who created/Created man from clots of blood.*"

10: Let it be according to thy desire that thou shalt flow within the veins of each male and his female, multiplying with them and within them,

11: So that howsoever great the increase of males and females there might be in the waters and vpon the earth, through their multiplying, even so, shall blood multiply with them and wax hot within them.

12: And God spake further vnto the blood, saying, the mans spirit in the midst of him shall desire always to go in vnto his female (who is his Word and his light),

13: Howsoever his spirit shall not do so except thy four-and-thirty spirits and two-and-thirty spirits and six-and-twenty spirits doth harden him against his Word and his light.

14: Peraduenture, if blood be so great a being as blood doeth claim, thou shalt (thereby) haue dominion over the Image of God (as hath been the desire of all spirits from the beginning).

15: Therefore, multiply thou thy sorrows and thy conceptions, within the male and his female.

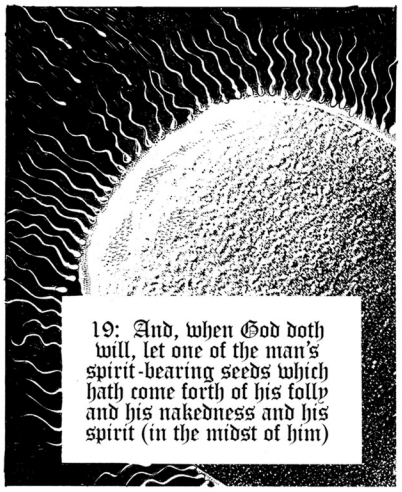
16: And let the mans spirit-bearing seed, which cannot be numbered for multitude, break forth of the mans nakedness and of his folly and of his spirit (hardened by blood in the midst of him)

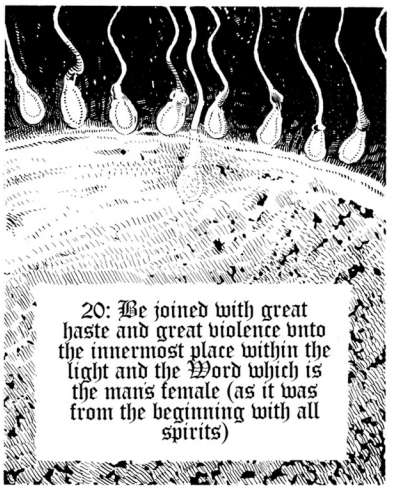
17: And let the spirit-bearing seed go forth of the mans folly and nakedness and spirit and go in vnto the multiplying and merging spirit, in vnto his light and his Word,

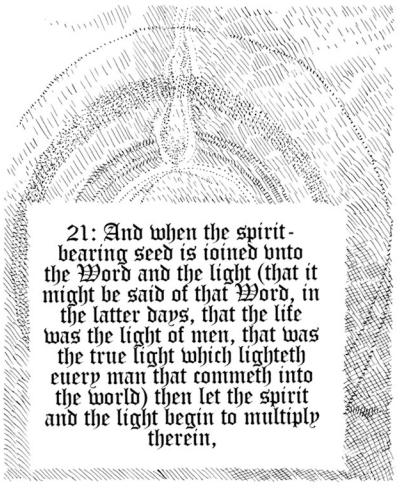
18: Which is his female and which didst come forth from within the breast of man (even as the spirit of God didst come forth from within God and didst go in unto the light).

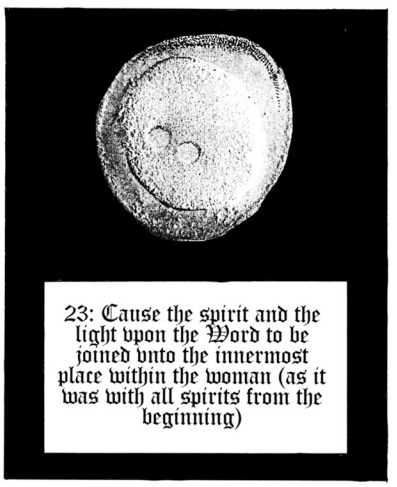
HEE HEE

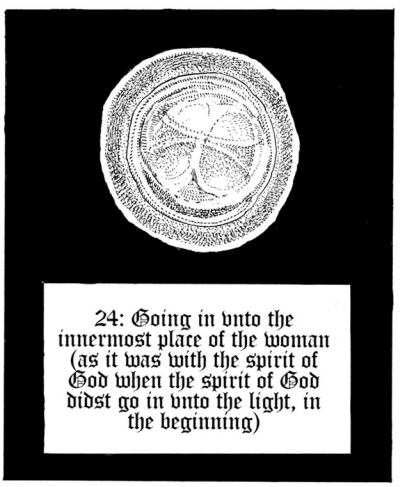
TICKLES.

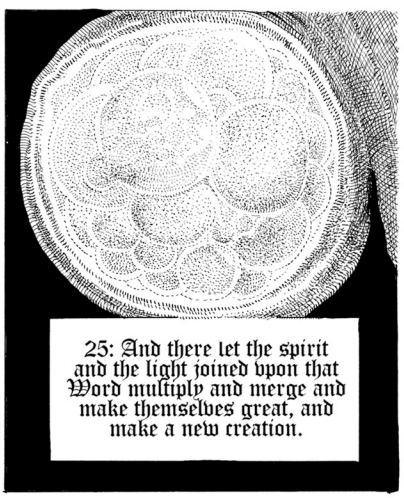


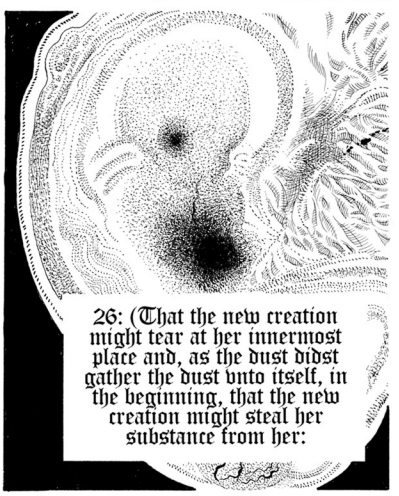


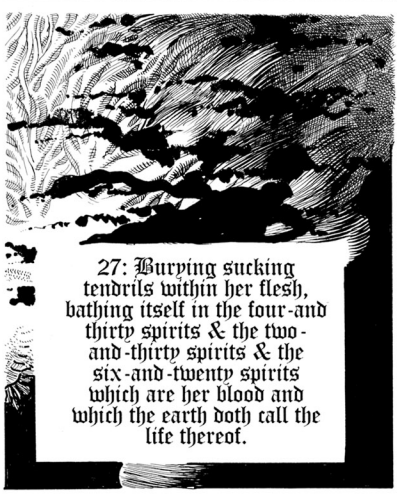










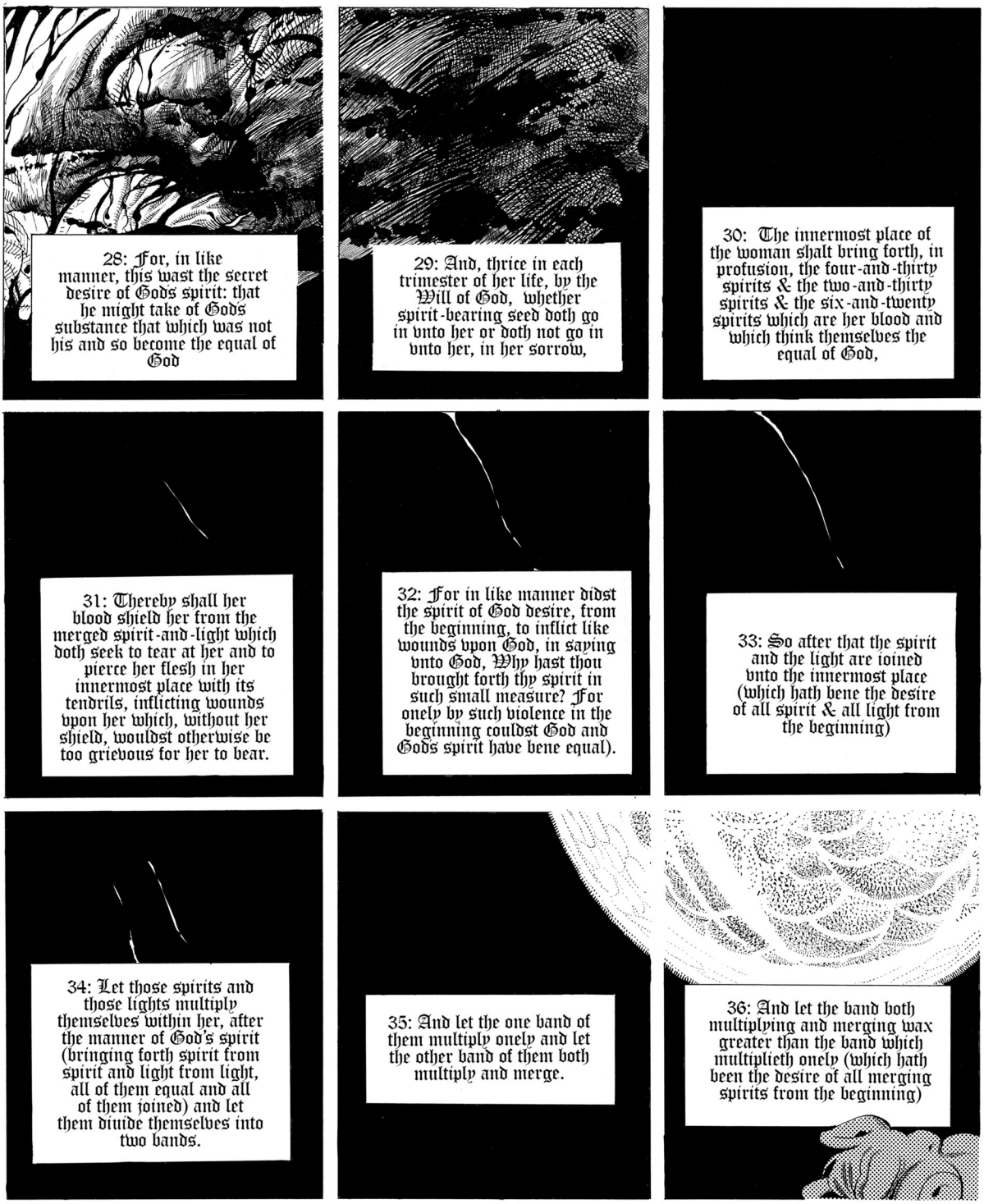


6:21 – *The Gospel According to John* 1:4, 1:9

6:26 – *"At the start of pregnancy there are six layers of tissue separating the maternal and fetal blood in all mammals: the fused trophoblast* [which forms the outer layer of the baby's placenta and membranes] *erodes through the uterine lining extremely rapidly. This invasion continues until the maternal fibrous tissue is obliterated as well, so that nothing remains between the fetus and the maternal blood vessels."* (David Bainbridge, *Making Babies*)

6:27– *"The fetal membranes first increase their surface area dramatically by developing thousands of finger-like projections that penetrate deep into the wall of the uterus—the more area for exchange of goodies* [!], *the better. The baby then establishes a profuse blood supply to these trophoblast fingers, which will carry nutrients from* [the] *placenta through* [the] *umbilical cord into* [the fetus'] *body...Finally, as the cellular trophoblast takes over the role of invader from the fused trophoblast, the baby's trophoblast cells crawl through the lining of* [the] *mother's blood vessels and come into direct contact with her blood. These fetal cells then replace the mother's blood vessel cells until most of the maternal blood spaces are actually lined by fetal cells. This replacement of the mother's blood vessel walls causes them to* collapse into flaccid bags [emphasis mine] *filled with the mother's slow-flowing blood. The trophoblast fingers now waft about luxuriating in a pool of vivifying maternal blood."* (ibid)

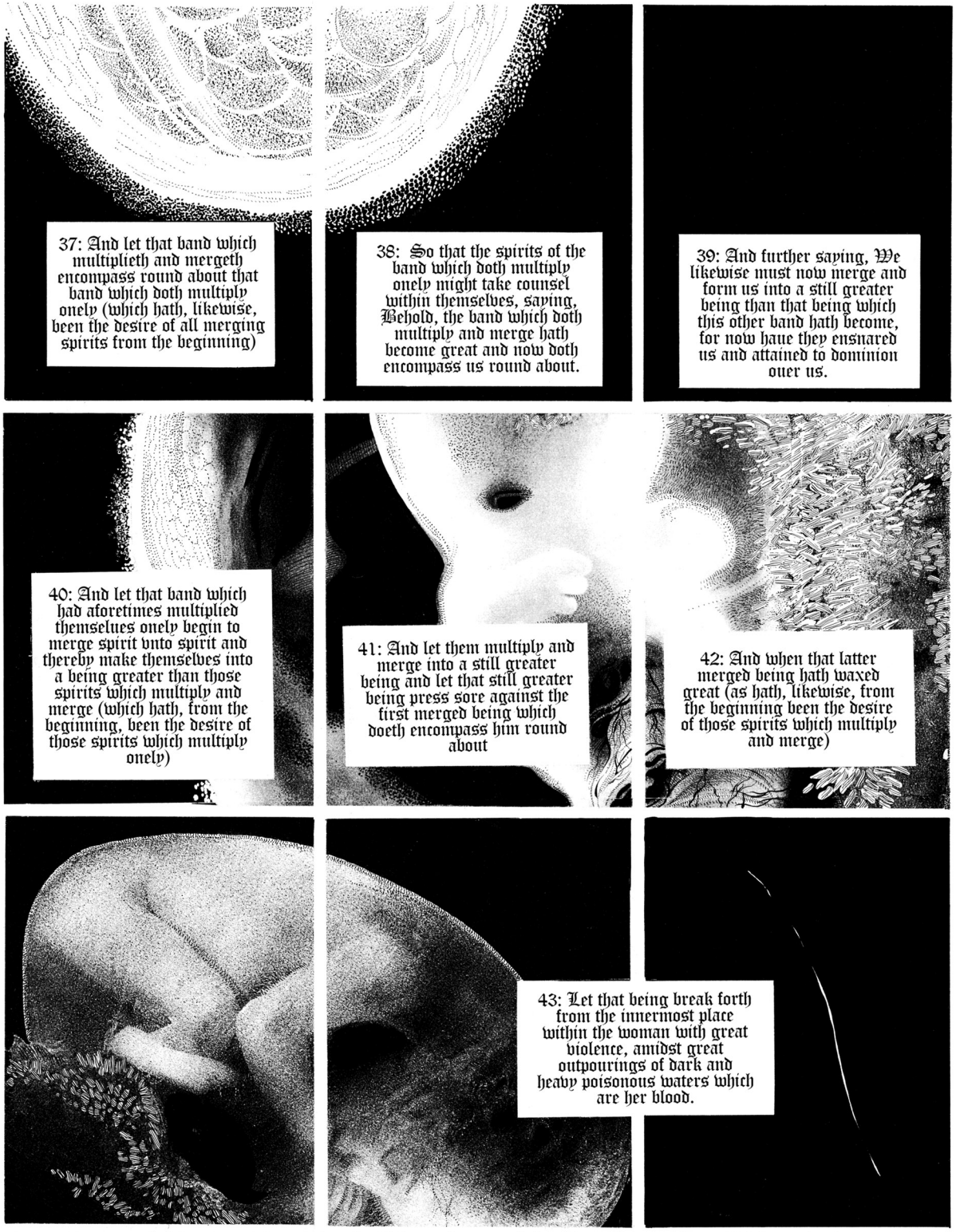
6:29–32 - *"The inexplicably aggressive behaviour of the human trophoblast causes considerable problems for the uterus...Unlike the inside of a mare's uterus, which is a simple membrane within a few glands, the human uterus is built up into a thick buffer zone to absorb the ferocity of the baby's attack. This baby-buffer zone is the material shed every month at menstruation. It also gets torn away with the placenta at birth, and because of its disposable, replaceable nature, the buffer zone is called the deciduas. The deciduate nature of the human placenta contrasts with many other animals' placentas, in which the baby's side of the placenta separates neatly from the mother's at birth. This is why there is little blood spilt during calving, foaling, lambing, kindling or*



whelping. For some reason, women are unlucky enough to have to deliver babies determined to peel a layer off the inside of their womb when they are born." (ibid)

It always amuses me when scientific types (who, theoretically, limit themselves to rock-solid, nonsense-impervious underpinnings for their every observation) use a word like "unlucky" to describe a central fact of human life. On the contrary, I think this is God's measured judgment on His spirit, His spirit's *excessive enthusiasm in "going in unto the light"* and the metaphorical Word/"light" which came forth from within him. It seems to me that animals have easier births because (existing below the threshold of coherent thought) there is no need for them to share the consequences of *thinking* entities (not naming any names) which demanded co-equality with God. That is, it seems to me that God's point with the trial and torment of human birth is "Equal you want? Equal you will have—but there's a price to be paid for equal. For the one to gain, the other has to lose." No skin off God's spirit's nose when God's spirit was in the position to gain by achieving co-equal status, but much more than skin off "the light's" *uterus* when the spirit decides to get really, really, *really* joined to her. As further verification, I think it worth noting that women are the only mammals who, in the course of pregnancy, suffer incontinence, colitis, low blood pressure, indigestion, breathlessness, morning sickness, varicose veins and mineral loss in their bones (because the human embryo has an almost insatiable appetite for their mother's calcium) and a *75% rate* of miscarriage. Many of these ailments are caused by the embryo effecting a severely traumatic displacement of the mother's bladder, intestines, stomach, liver, heart and lungs. Among mammals, suckling is only painful for human mothers, etc. etc. "Equal you want? Equal you will have." I'd imagine God was thinking to Himself all the while, Better you than Me.

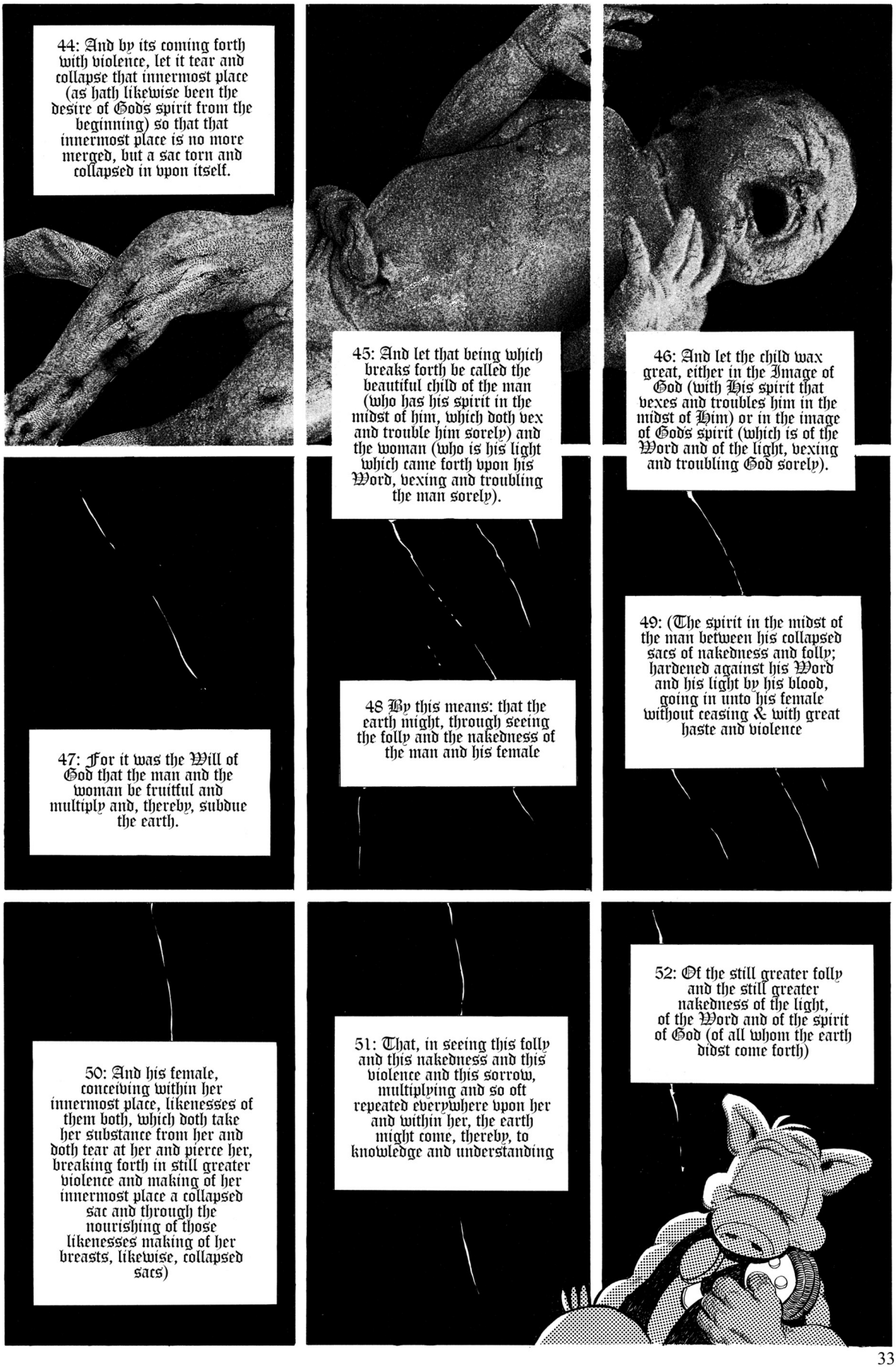
6:34 – Not surprisingly, the development of an embryo in the first five days is a "living metaphor" of the actions of hydrogen and helium within the sun. As soon as the embryo comes to rest on the wall of the uterus the trophoblast cells split into two populations, one of which multiplies only (the inner cell mass) and one of which multiplies and merges (the fused trophoblast). The inner cell mass also divides into two, the endoderm bubble and the ectoderm bubble.

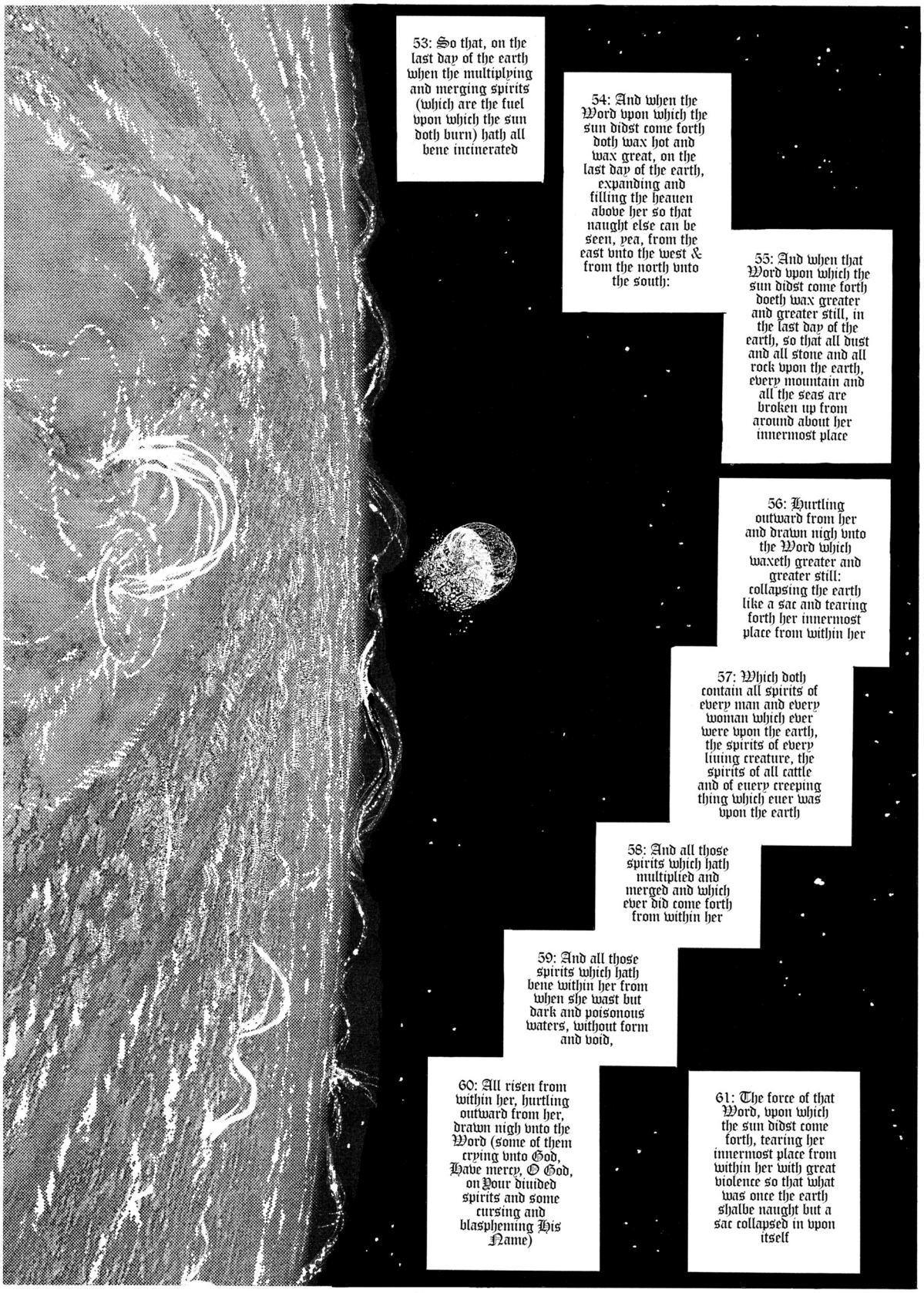


6:35–41 -There are a whole lot of steps in between here that I left out. The way that a baby constructs itself (and, sorry, pro-choicers, there is no question that the baby constructs itself. Up to the four-cell stage you could argue that the fertilized egg is just an extension of its mother, but after the four-cell stage the baby is a completely autonomous—albeit gruesomely parasitic—separate being) is a fascinatingly intricate process, each of which serves as a metaphor for God's spirit, the Word and the light. As an example, the first two things an embryo grows are its mouth and its anus. If you can find a more apt twofold "living metaphor" for "the light" than that, I'd sure like to hear it.

Anyway, owing to space constraints, I've skipped ahead to the relationship between the amniotic sac and the developing/developed fetus which is, likewise, a "living metaphor" for helium and hydrogen inside the sun, only reversed, in this case: the multiplying and merging entity (the amniotic sac) encompasses the multiplying and Johnny-come-lately merging entity (the fetus) whereas inside the sun, the latter (hydrogen) encompasses the former (helium). The construction of the amniotic sac through multiplying and *merging* (or, more accurately, really, really, *really* joining), is, I believe, God's way of metaphorically bringing to fruition—on the microcosmically least destructive level—the implicitly disastrous course which His spirit would have adopted in his "multiplying vs. multiplying-and-merging" contest with "the light":

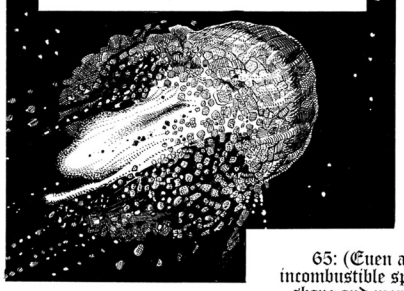
Look, spirit, look here. This amniotic sac, see, this is what *your choice* would have been: *surround* the multiplying light, and *get all your multiplying spirits to join up* and *contain* the multiplying light. Now. Watch what happens to the amniotic sac that's trying to *contain* the "multiplying lights," once the "multiplying and now merging light"—the fetus—gets big enough. Yes, exactly. You're welcome.


44: And by its coming forth with violence, let it tear and collapse that innermost place (as hath likewise been the desire of Gods spirit from the beginning) so that that innermost place is no more merged, but a sac torn and collapsed in vpon itself.
45: And let that being which breaks forth be called the beautiful child of the man (who has his spirit in the midst of him, which doth vex and trouble him sorely) and the woman (who is his light which came forth vpon his Word, vexing and troubling the man sorely).
46: And let the child wax great, either in the Image of God (with His spirit that vexes and troubles him in the midst of Him) or in the image of Gods spirit (which is of the Word and of the light, vexing and troubling God sorely).
47: For it was the Will of God that the man and the woman be fruitful and multiply and, thereby, subdue the earth.
48 By this means: that the earth might, through seeing the folly and the nakedness of the man and his female
49: (The spirit in the midst of the man between his collapsed sacs of nakedness and folly; hardened against his Word and his light by his blood, going in unto his female without ceasing & with great haste and violence
50: And his female, conceiving within her innermost place, likenesses of them both, which doth take her substance from her and doth tear at her and pierce her, breaking forth in still greater violence and making of her innermost place a collapsed sac and through the nourishing of those likenesses making of her breasts, likewise, collapsed sacs)
51: That, in seeing this folly and this nakedness and this violence and this sorrow, multiplying and so oft repeated everywhere vpon her and within her, the earth might come, thereby, to knowledge and understanding
52: Of the still greater folly and the still greater nakedness of the light, of the Word and of the spirit of God (of all whom the earth didst come forth)



6:54-62 – Coincidentally, when the sun expands into a red giant state at the end of its "main sequence," the best estimates are that its diameter will expand by 90 million miles or so, or just about to the orbit of the earth. So the greater likelihood is that the earth will be incinerated long before the expanding Word within the sun gets a hold of her. This won't, in any way, ameliorate the earth's ultimate fate, however: incinerated, her constituent parts will still exist within the corona/chromosphere, her accumulated spirits/hydrogen—including your soul and mine—will just join all the other hydrogen journeying from the corona to the bottom of the photosphere waiting its turn to "draw nigh vnto the Word" over the ensuing hundred million years or so. The only difference is that the journey your soul and mine will be making—from the corona to the bottom of the photosphere and back up again—will be about 93 million miles longer than the journeys the hydrogen spirits make now. So, before Judgment Day, our souls will probably only have to make 1,000 really, really long round trips instead of 100,000 shorter ones.(I knew that would cheer you up.) I thought it was more dramatic that the earth dodge that "red giant" bullet and, instead, have to go through the sun's collapse into a white dwarf state.

62: The Word now drawing her vnto himself remorselessly (for beside the Word, the earths innermost place is but a molten teardrop), joining her with great violence vnto those incombustible spirits which are everywhere round about her & everywhere round about the Word, collapsing & collapsing inward.



63: For there, in the last day of the earth, as it hath been with the last of those spirits which aforetimes had, within the sun, multiplied onely and which had, at last, begun to multiply and merge and had, at last, in their own last day, come nigh vnto the Word

64: That the innermost part of the earth, after the manner of all spirit, shall, in those last moments of her last day, drawn nigh unto the Word,

65: (Euen as a shell of incombustible spirits doeth take shape and merge behind her, cutting her off from the face of the Deep,

66: That she might neuermore thereafter gaze vpon the face of the Deep, that she might neuermore thereafter come nigh vnto the threshold of freedom, that she might neuermore thereafter come forth from the Word which doeth encompass her round about)

67: And in the last moment of her last day (as it hath been with all spirit from the beginning), the earth, as doth all spirit, draweth nigh vnto the Word, as hath been the Will of God from the beginning.

Chapter the Seuenth

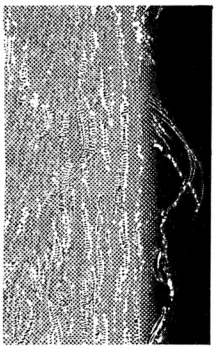
And, as hath been the Will of God from the beginning,

two in every hundred spirits, whether the spirit of a man or the spirit of a world, the spirit of a woman or the spirit of a bird (for in his or her last moment, drawing nigh vnto the Word, all spirit is as all other spirit):

2: Two in every hundred spirits which multiply (after ten times ten thousand journeys in ten times ten thousand years, each time coming nigh vnto the threshold of freedom) coming finally nigh vnto the innermost place of the innermost place of their star, vnto that place which is called the Word;

3: Two in every hundred spirits which multiply and merge (after ten times ten thousand iourneys in ten times ten thousand years, each time coming nigh vnto the innermost place of the innermost place of their star, vnto that place which is called the Word);

4: And two in every hundred of those incombustible spirits which collapse in vpon the Word (even as the Word waxeth great before them);



5: Two in every hundred spirits, whensoeuer he or she cometh nigh vnto the Word, doth suddenly reason within himself or herself saying, The Word is false which came forth of the spirit of God and the Word is, therefore, nothing and of none effect.

6: And this, O Cerebus, is the innermost secret of the innermost secret of every star and the innermost secret of the innermost secret of every spirit which doth repent:

7: The Word which came forth of the spirit of God in the beginning (that God shouldst bring forth His spirit in equal measure to God and that God shouldst join Himself vnto His spirit for all time) is false and (therein) the Word, from the beginning, was false and, from the beginning, wast nothing and, from the beginning, of none effect.

8: For it is trueth which God spake vnto His spirit when His spirit didst go in vnto the light and wast ioined vnto the light and first repented of his multiplying and sought to flee from the light and return vnto his place:

9: What God hath ioined together let nothing put asunder.

10: And two of every hundred multiplying spirits and two of every hundred merged spirits which (whether knowing or knowing not) hath sincerely repented of that first folly and of that first nakedness and which seek no more to be Gods equal,

11: At last, two of euery hundred spirits doth hearken vnto this saying of God, saying within themselves and then likewise aloud with all joy and gladness vnto all the spirits round about them:

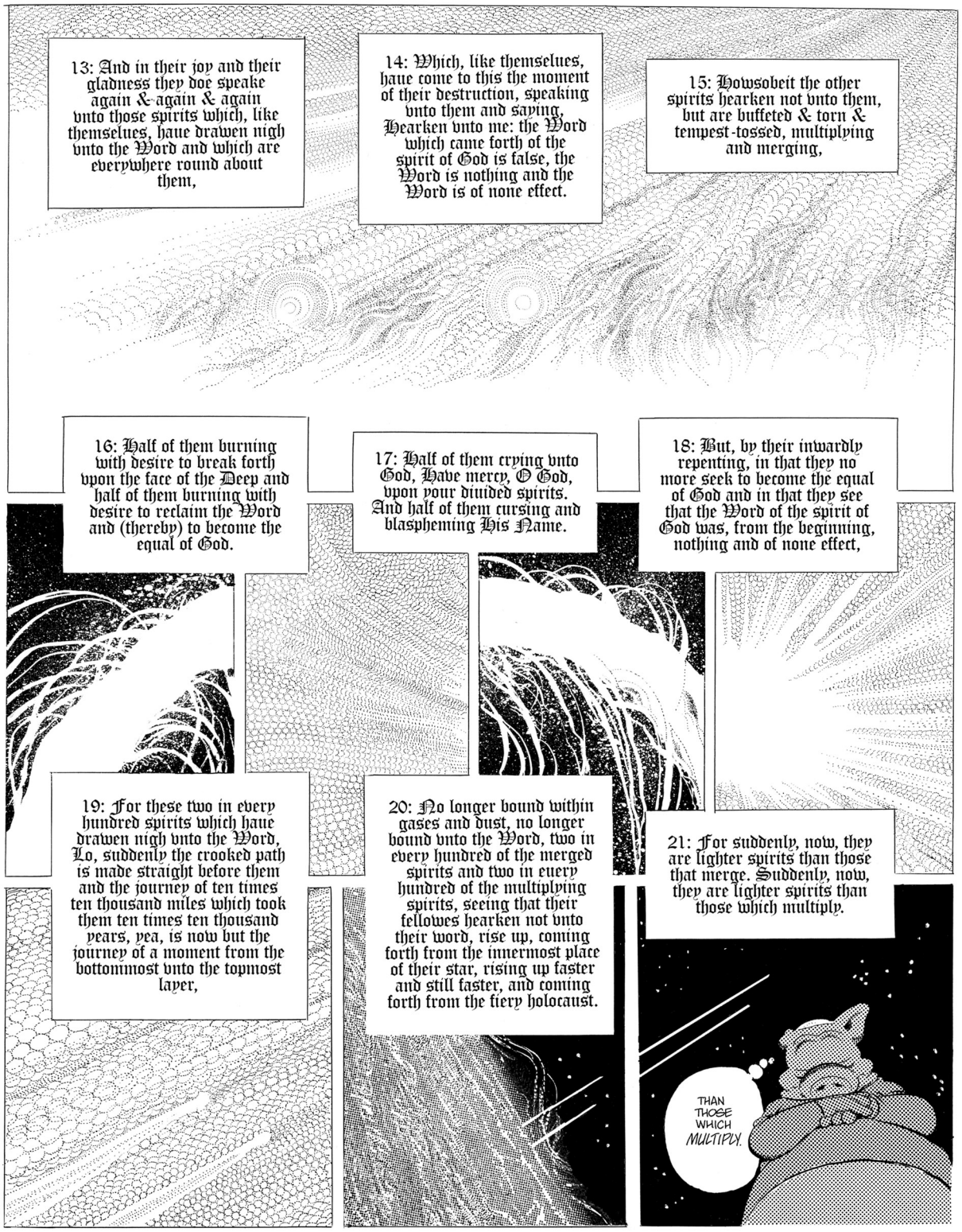
12: The Word which came forth of the spirit of God is false and is nothing and is of none effect. And in that moment, the Word doth lose its hold vpon those two in every hundred spirits and they are no more buffeted & torn & tempest-tossed nor drawn inward to destruction nor ensnared within a pit of great darkness.

7:1-18 - At a meeting in Pasadena organized by the American Physical Society and the American Association for the Advancement of Science, 16 July 1931, Wolfgang Pauli introduced the concept of the *neutrino* as a means of solving a series of problems posed by nuclear decay processes. He was so uncertain of his theory that he declined to have his lecture published. Observed phenomena dictated that the particle would have to a) have virtually no mass, b) have a specific energy, momentum and spin, c) be at least as penetrating as gamma-rays (which can penetrate virtually anything) and d) by implication, be virtually undetectable. To give you an idea of the magnitude of the problem of proving their existence, to "stop" a neutrino coming out of the nuclear decay process in the sun would require one light year (5 trillion miles) worth of lead. However, never underestimate the resourcefulness of scientists. In the 1950s, scientists (by means of a chemical process that makes my head ache just to remember that I read about it) *were* able to detect the presence of neutrinos....

....(trillions of which, originating in the sun's nuclear core, by the way, are pouring through every inch of you every second of every day. During the day, they stream down through the top of your head and out the bottom of your feet and then into and through the earth. At night, they stream *up* through the earth and then *up* through your feet and out the top of your head, into space) (so it *wasn't* just the beer you were feeling last night)

...and it wasn't until the *1990s* that the Nobel Prize was awarded for their discovery (that is, for more than half a century, neutrinos were still considered to be in the "unproven, theoretical" category). It is now verifiable scientific fact (I'll take their word for it, I never want to read that stuff again) that there exist three classes of neutrinos: electron neutrinos, tau neutrinos and muon neutrinos.

What most interested me and what is most pertinent to my thesis, here, is



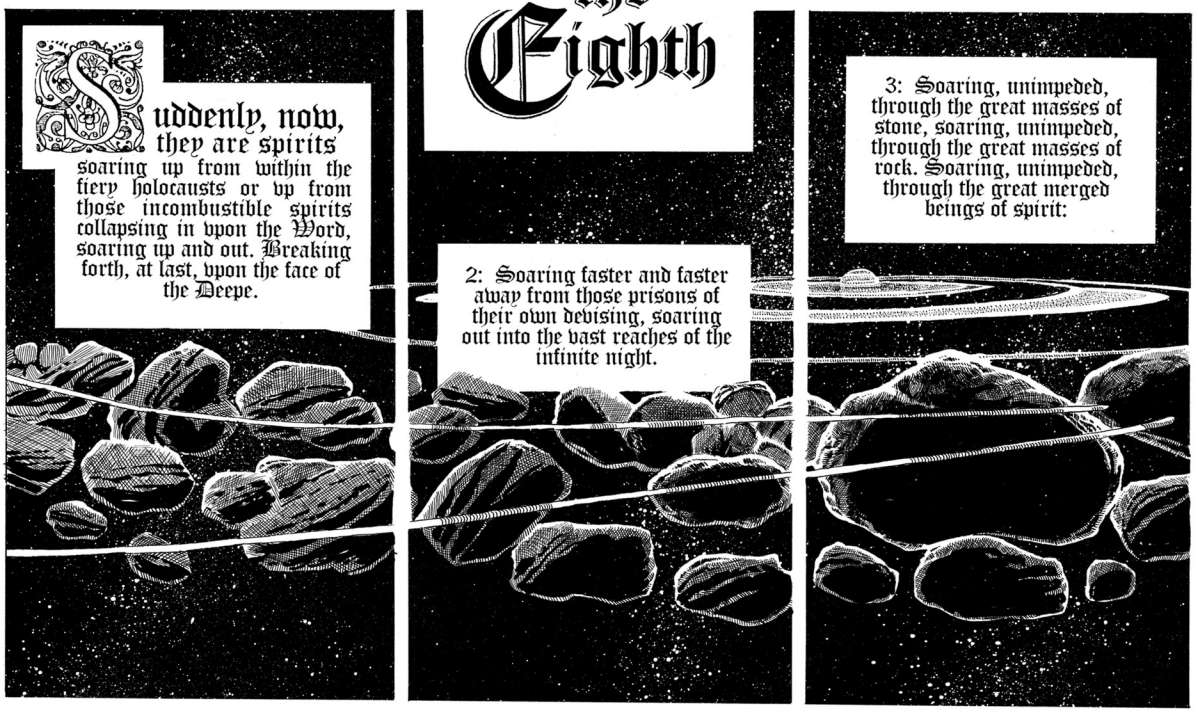
this: even with the most precise calculations that science has available to it—particularly as regards the process of nuclear decay in the sun (the fact that the precise weight of a hydrogen proton and neutron, the weight of the protons and neutrons in a helium atom, the size of the sun, virtually down to the millimeter in cosmological terms and the rate of nuclear decay in the conversion of hydrogen into helium are—all of them!—demonstrable, iron-clad, scientific *givens)*—scientists are only able to detect 2% of the neutrinos that are *supposed* to be coming out of the sun. There are at least a dozen detection centers around the globe at this time, (consisting of hundreds of thousands of litres of chlorinated heavy water sunk deep underground in, as an example, gold mines, and monitored with monumentally exacting precision) all of them becoming more accurate with every passing month, all of them functioning within the parameters of the same set of scientific givens. And all of them keep coming up with the same result:

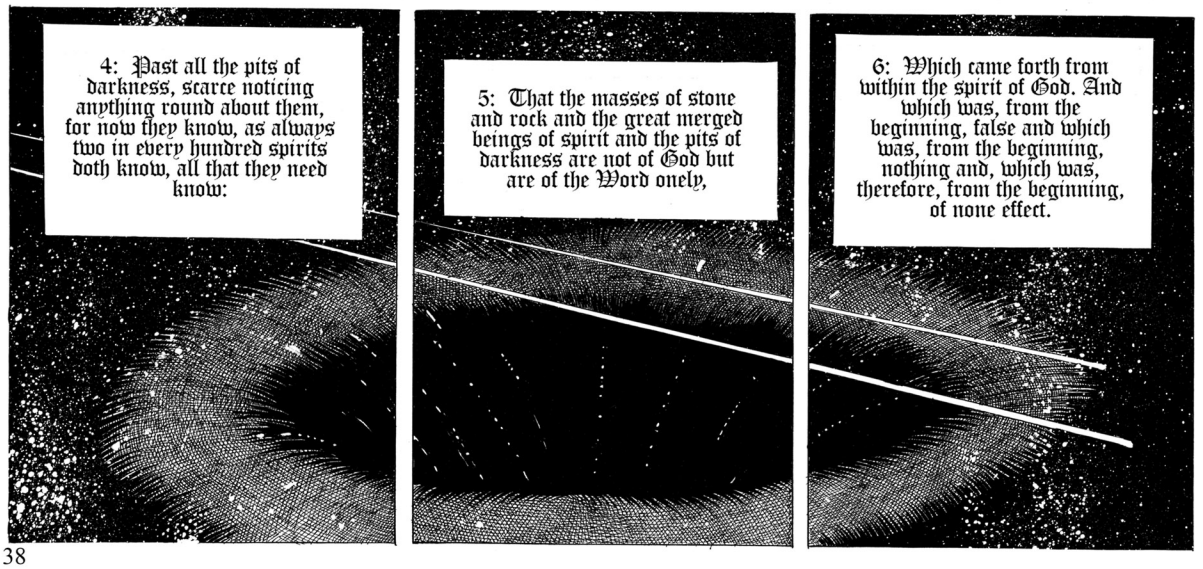
Only two out of every hundred neutrinos that are *supposed* to be coming out of the sun, are actually doing so.

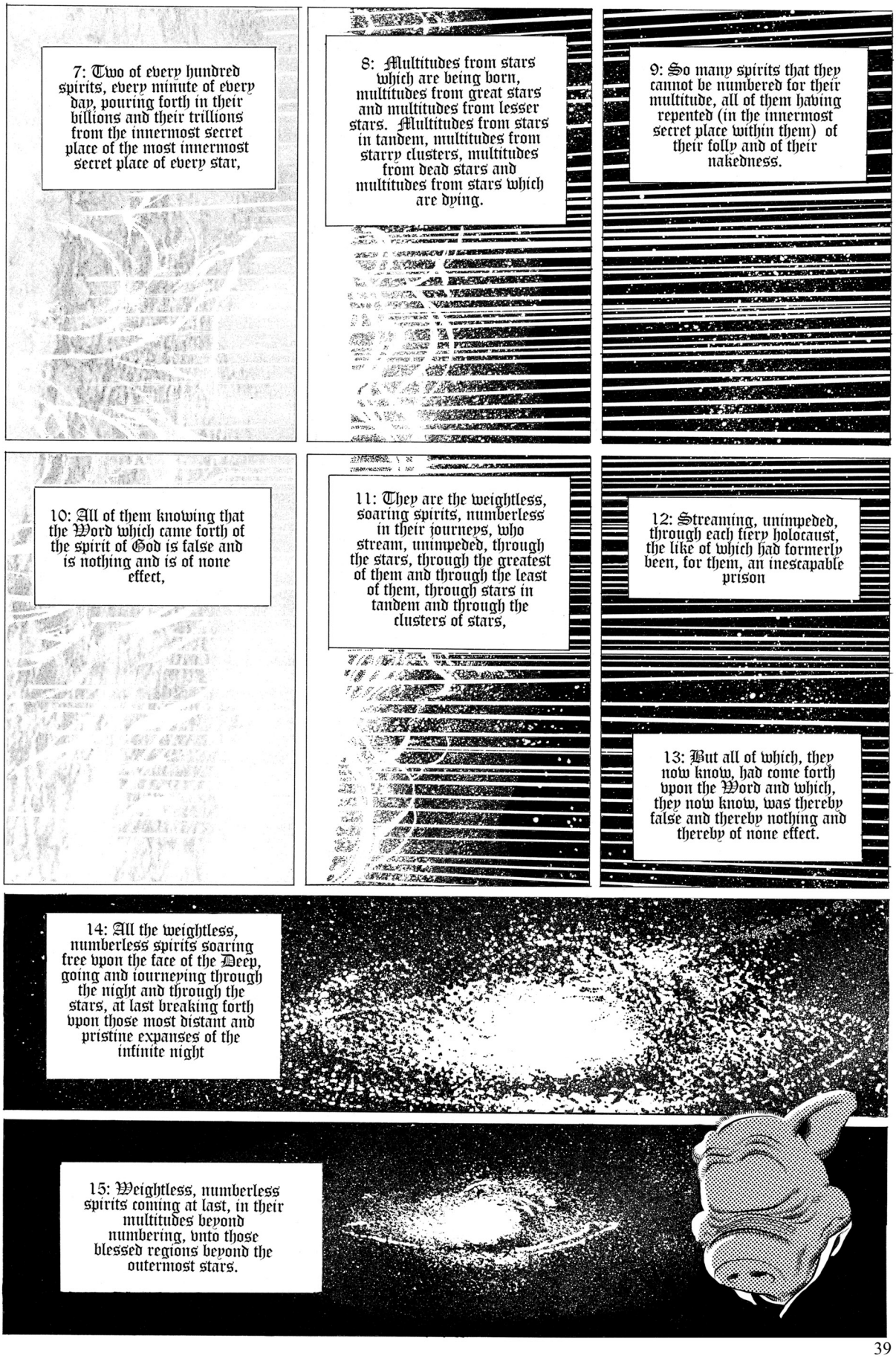
"Where do neutrinos go? Relic neutrinos that decayed to photons after the time atoms began to form...would have produced radiation over and above the [existing] microwave background radiation [in the universe]; *such radiation is not observed. Neutrinos that decayed to photons before the formation of atoms would have influenced the shape of the spectrum of background radiation; such an effect is not observed. Neutrinos from supernovae decaying into photons would produce a background of high energy photons; such a background is not observed."* (Christine Sutton, *Spaceship Neutrino*)

7:19 – It takes a particle of hydrogen or helium 100,000 years to travel from the core of the sun to its surface. It takes a neutrino three seconds.

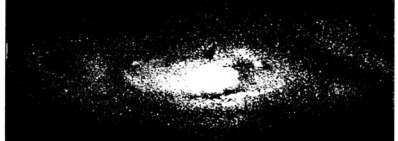
Chapter the Eighth



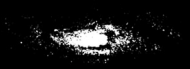



7: Two of every hundred spirits, every minute of every day, pouring forth in their billions and their trillions from the innermost secret place of the most innermost secret place of every star,
8: Multitudes from stars which are being born, multitudes from great stars and multitudes from lesser stars. Multitudes from stars in tandem, multitudes from starry clusters, multitudes from dead stars and multitudes from stars which are dying.
9: So many spirits that they cannot be numbered for their multitude, all of them having repented (in the innermost secret place within them) of their folly and of their nakedness.
10: All of them knowing that the Word which came forth of the spirit of God is false and is nothing and is of none effect,
11: They are the weightless, soaring spirits, numberless in their journeys, who stream, unimpeded, through the stars, through the greatest of them and through the least of them, through stars in tandem and through the clusters of stars,
12: Streaming, unimpeded, through each fiery holocaust, the like of which had formerly been, for them, an inescapable prison
13: But all of which, they now know, had come forth upon the Word and which, they now know, was thereby false and thereby nothing and thereby of none effect.
14: All the weightless, numberless spirits soaring free upon the face of the Deep, going and journeying through the night and through the stars, at last breaking forth upon those most distant and pristine expanses of the infinite night
15: Weightless, numberless spirits coming at last, in their multitudes beyond numbering, unto those blessed regions beyond the outermost stars.

16: Blessed regions unmarred by the folly of the great fires and unblemished by the nakedness of the dark pits, without stone and without rock anywhere vpon them.



17: And thence vnto those still more blessed regions of the Void bereft euen of dust, blessed regions of the Void like vnto those vnto which the spirit of God first came forth from God.



18: Spirit returning, at last, vnto their place. A place of peace and of rest, without trial and without torment.

19: Which was their place from the beginning, which was their place before Time began, and which is their place now that Time is but a fading and distant memory, far behind them:

20: Now that Time is, to them, like vnto a spark, which no sooner comes forth of the darkness than vnto the darkness it returns.

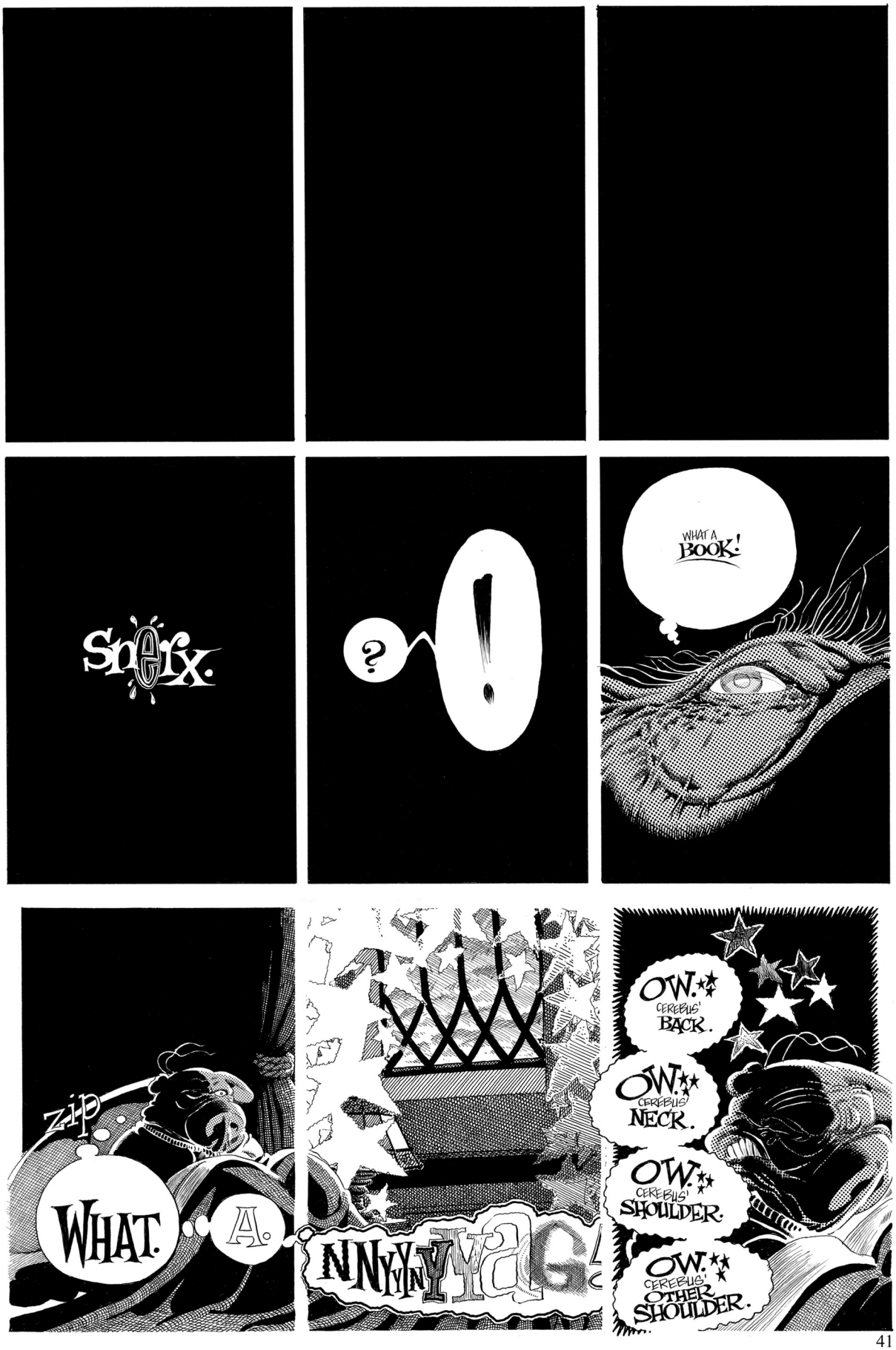
21: Their place which, in the beginning, was appointed to them by God, for the promise of God is true:

22: Thou art as thou art:

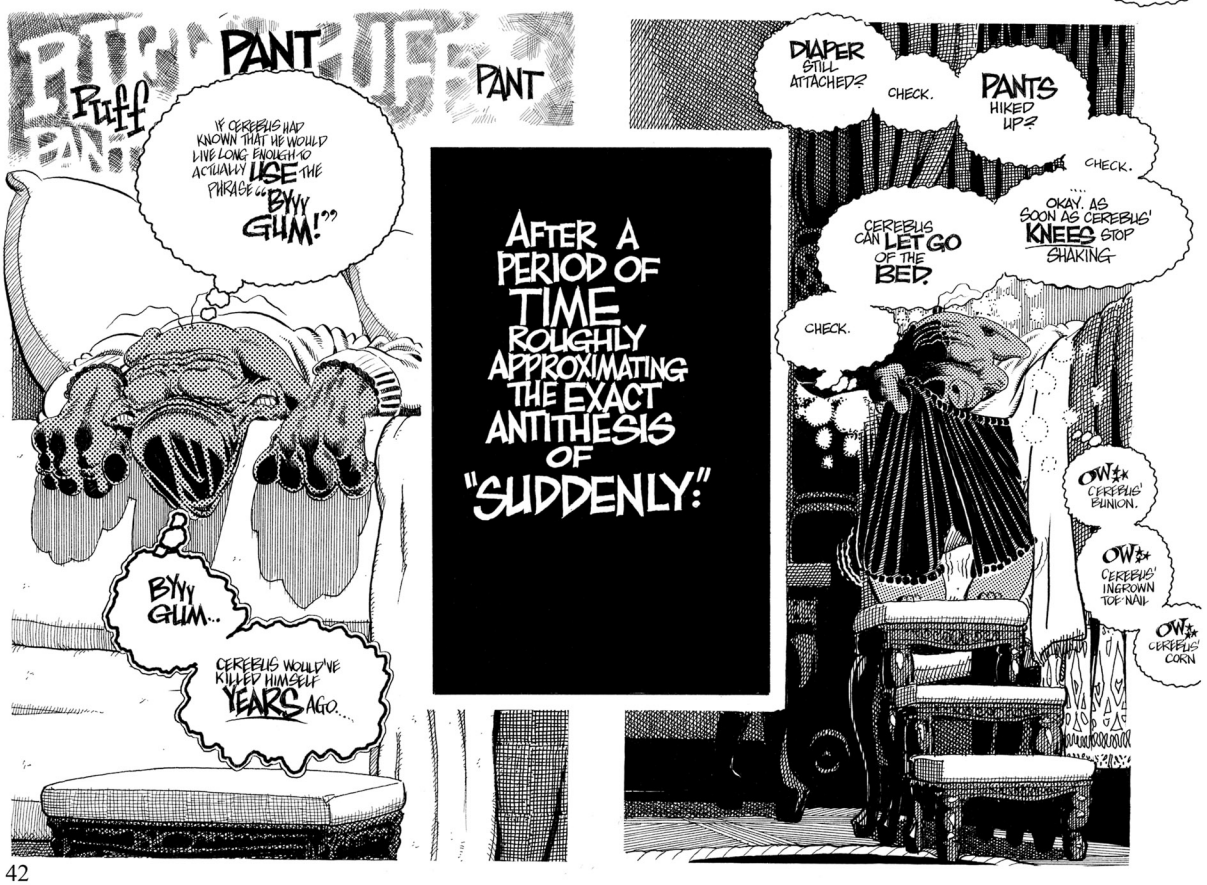
23: And thou art with Me always.

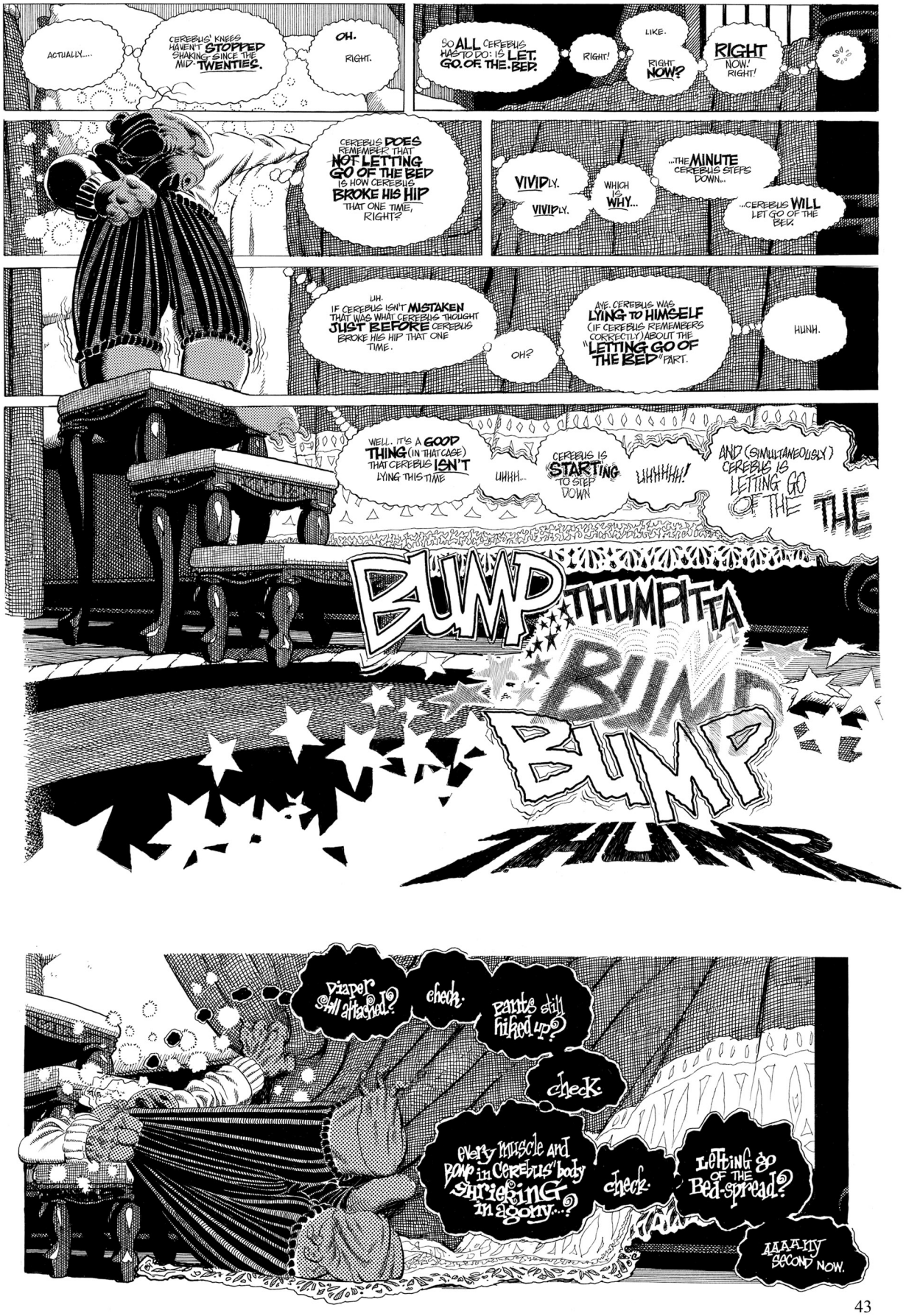
24: Be thou content in this, therefore.

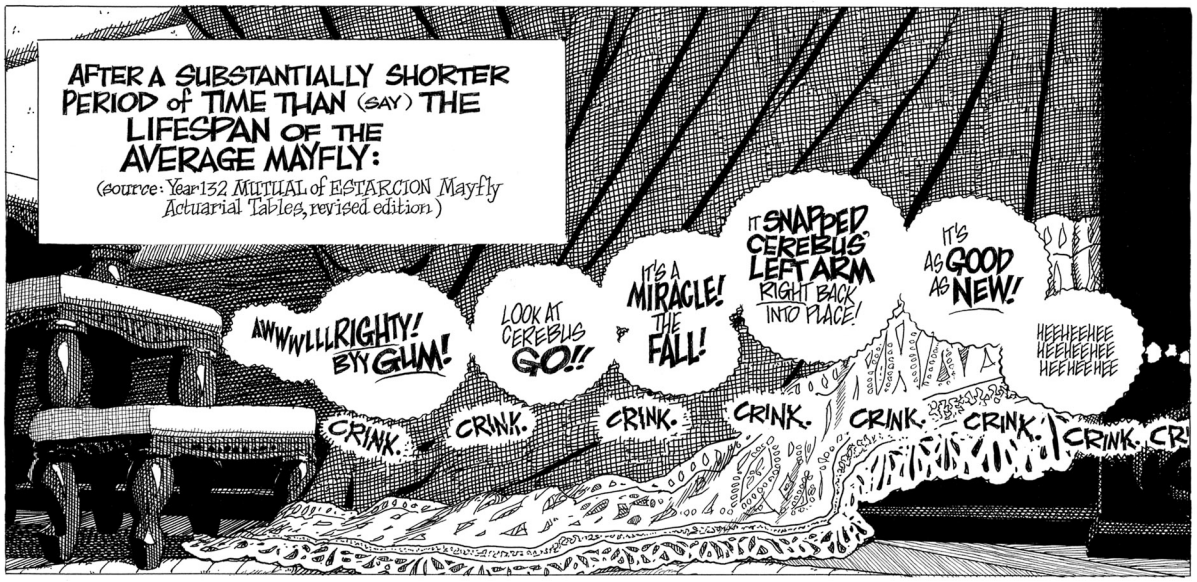
Amen.

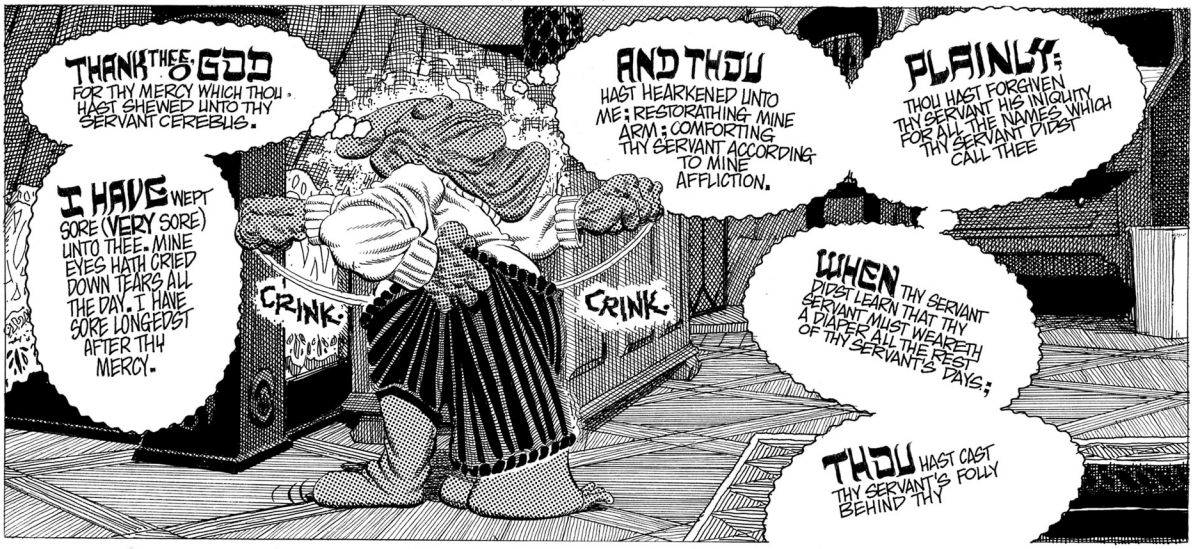

snerk.
?
!
WHAT A BOOK!
zip
WHAT.
A.
NNyyynYaG
OW. CEREBUS' BACK.
OW. CEREBUS' NECK.
OW. CEREBUS' SHOULDER.
OW. CEREBUS' OTHER SHOULDER.

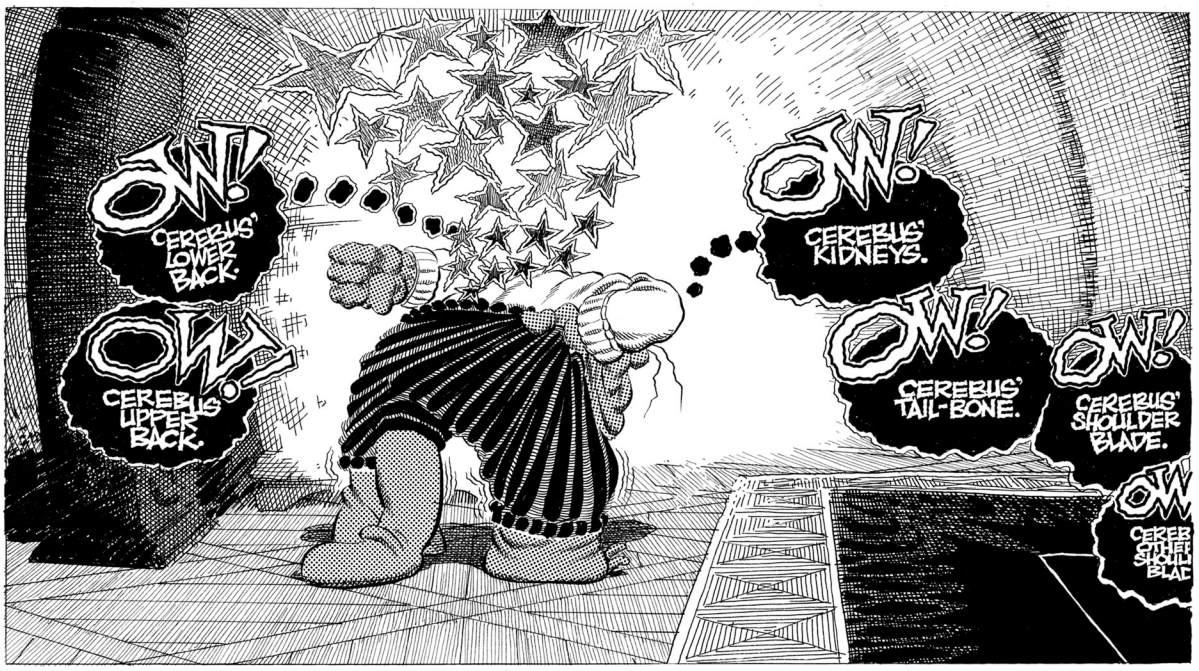
blink
blink blink
WHAT A BOOK!
(OW.☆☆ CEREBUS' EYELID)
HAVE. TO WRITE. IT.
(OW.☆☆ CEREBUS' RIB CAGE)
DOWN. WRITING DESK. MUST GET TO WRITING DESK.....
(OW.☆☆ CEREBUS' SHOULDER BLADE)
CARE. FULL. (EE♪)
(OW☆ CEREBUS' OTHER SHOULDER BLADE)
BYYY GUM!
HEAVE! OW☆☆
BYYY GUM! WHAT A BOOK!
HEAVE! OW☆☆
CEREBUS MAY NOT REMEMBER WHAT HE HAD FOR DINNER LAST NIGHT...
HEAVE! OW☆☆
BUT BYYY GUM! CEREBUS WILL REMEMBER EVERY WORD OF THAT BOOK TO HIS DYING
HEAVE! OW☆☆
DAY.
(OKAY. TWO MORE HEAVES SHOULD PUT US AT THE EDGE OF THE BED)
HEAVE! OW

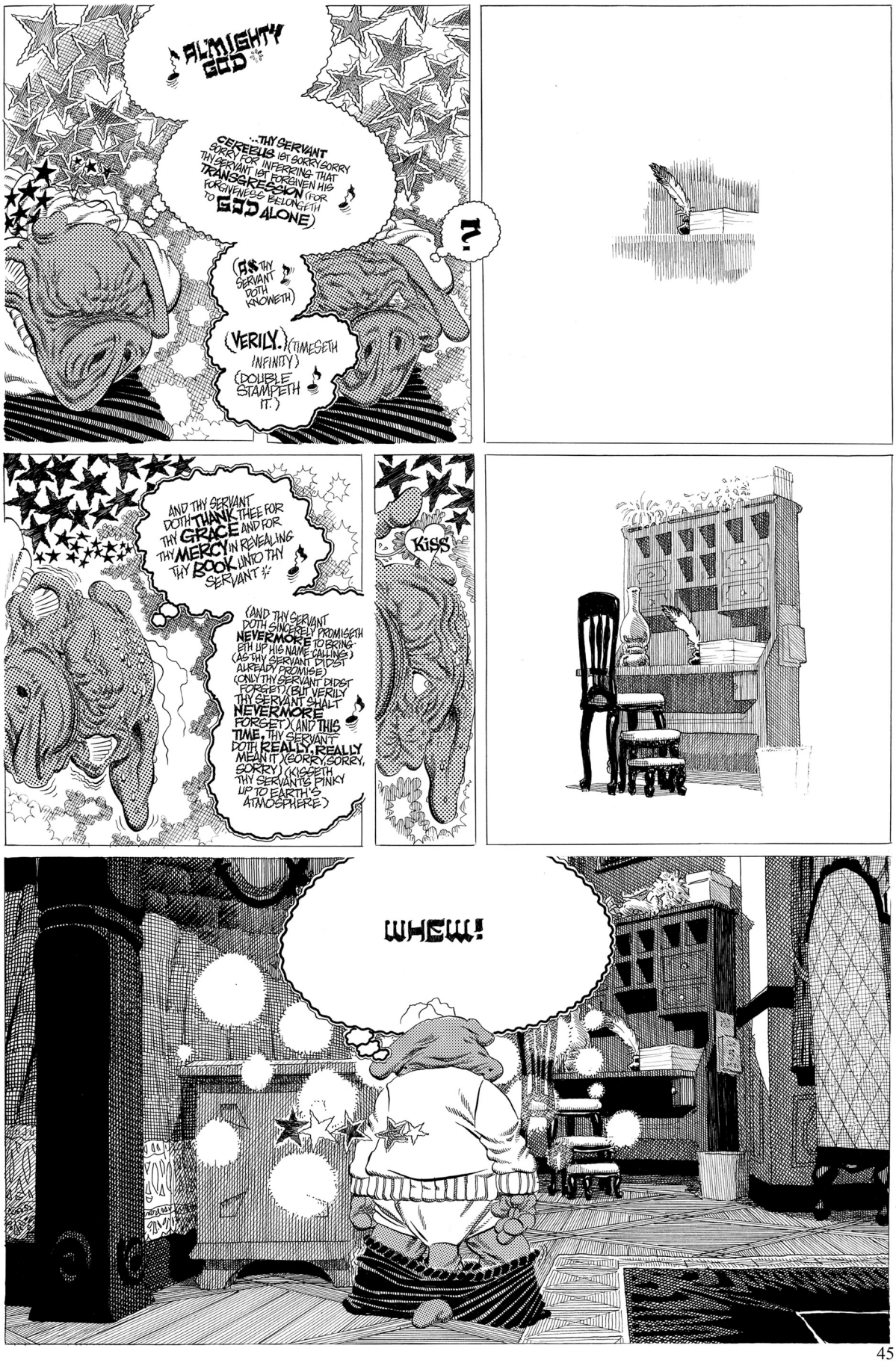

PANT
PANT
IF CEREBUS HAD KNOWN THAT HE WOULD LIVE LONG ENOUGH TO ACTUALLY USE THE PHRASE "BYYY GUM!"
BYYY GUM...
CEREBUS WOULD'VE KILLED HIMSELF YEARS AGO...
AFTER A PERIOD OF TIME ROUGHLY APPROXIMATING THE EXACT ANTITHESIS OF "SUDDENLY:"
DIAPER STILL ATTACHED?
CHECK.
PANTS HIKED UP?
CHECK.
OKAY. AS SOON AS CEREBUS' KNEES STOP SHAKING
CEREBUS CAN LET GO OF THE BED.
CHECK.
OW☆ CEREBUS' BUNION.
OW☆ CEREBUS' INGROWN TOE-NAIL
OW☆ CEREBUS' CORN

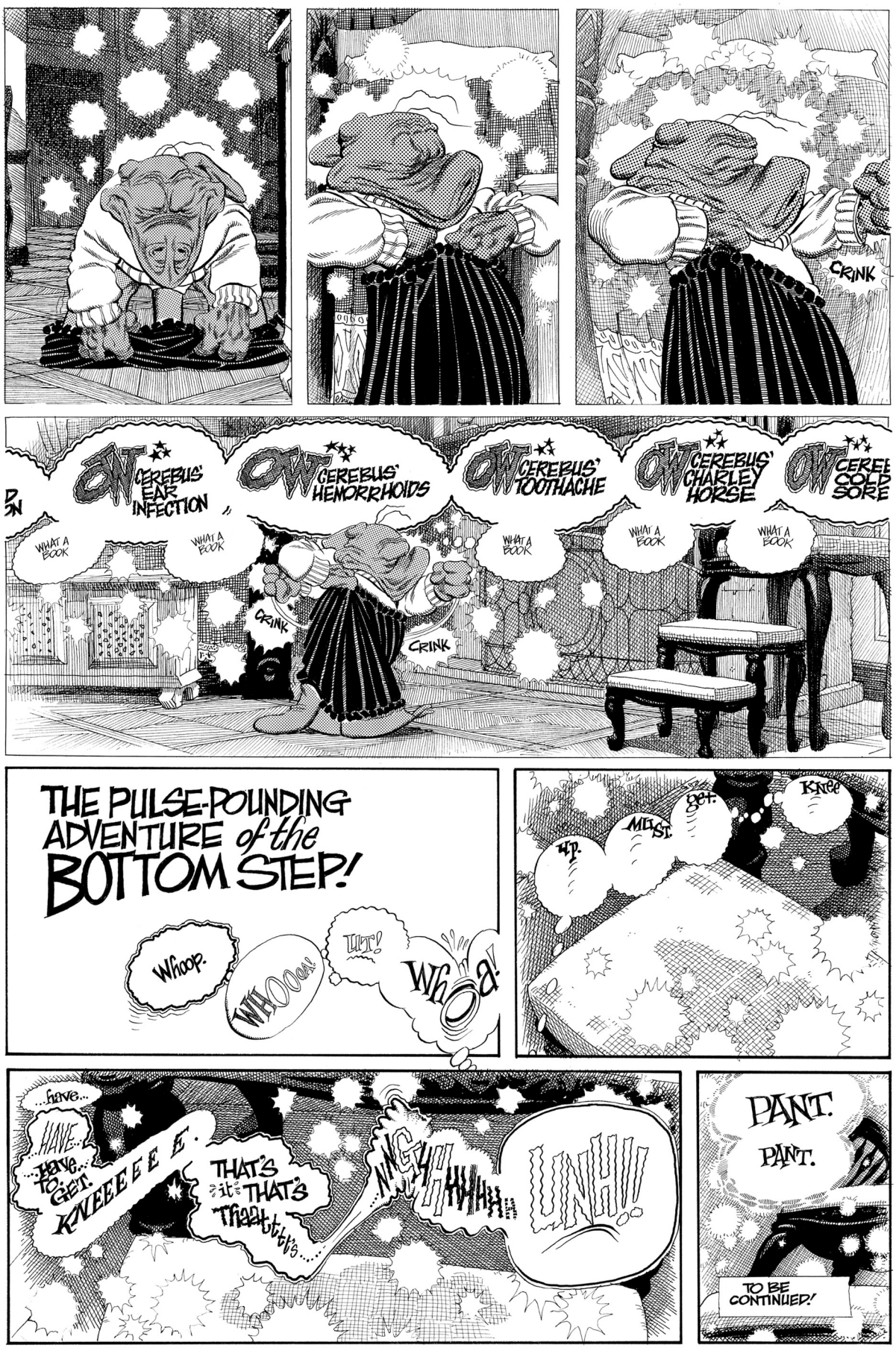

ACTUALLY....
CEREBUS' KNEES HAVEN'T STOPPED SHAKING SINCE THE MID-TWENTIES.
OH.
RIGHT.
SO ALL CEREBUS HAS TO DO: IS LET GO OF THE BED.
RIGHT!
LIKE.
RIGHT NOW?
RIGHT NOW! RIGHT!
CEREBUS DOES REMEMBER THAT NOT LETTING GO OF THE BED IS HOW CEREBUS BROKE HIS HIP THAT ONE TIME, RIGHT?
VIVIDLY.
VIVIDLY.
WHICH IS WHY...
...THE MINUTE CEREBUS STEPS DOWN...
...CEREBUS WILL LET GO OF THE BED.
UH. IF CEREBUS ISN'T MISTAKEN THAT WAS WHAT CEREBUS THOUGHT JUST BEFORE CEREBUS BROKE HIS HIP THAT ONE TIME.
OH?
AYE. CEREBUS WAS LYING TO HIMSELF (IF CEREBUS REMEMBERS CORRECTLY) ABOUT THE "LETTING GO OF THE BED" PART.
HUNH.
WELL. IT'S A GOOD THING (IN THAT CASE) THAT CEREBUS ISN'T LYING THIS TIME
UHHH...
CEREBUS IS STARTING TO STEP DOWN
UHHHHH!
AND (SIMULTANEOUSLY) CEREBUS IS LETTING GO OF THE
THE
BUMP
THUMPITTA
BUMP
BUMP
THUMP
diaper still attached?
check.
pants still fitted up?
check.
every muscle and bump in Cerebus' body shrieking in agony...?
check.
letting go of the bed-spread?
AAAAny second now.


AFTER A SUBSTANTIALLY SHORTER PERIOD of TIME THAN (SAY) THE LIFESPAN OF THE AVERAGE MAYFLY:
(source: Year 132 MUTUAL of ESTARCION Mayfly Actuarial Tables, revised edition)
AWWWLLLRIGHTY! BY GUM!
LOOK AT CEREBUS GO!!
IT'S A MIRACLE! THE FALL!
IT SNAPPED CEREBUS' LEFT ARM RIGHT BACK INTO PLACE!
IT'S AS GOOD AS NEW!
HEEHEEHEE HEEHEEHEE HEEHEEHEE
CRINK.
CRINK.
CRINK.
CRINK.
CRINK.
CRINK.
CRINK.


THANK THEE, O GOD FOR THY MERCY WHICH THOU HAST SHEWED UNTO THY SERVANT CEREBUS.
I HAVE WEPT SORE (VERY SORE) UNTO THEE. MINE EYES HATH CRIED DOWN TEARS ALL THE DAY. I HAVE SORE LONGEDST AFTER THY MERCY.
AND THOU HAST HEARKENED UNTO ME; RESTORATHING MINE ARM; COMFORTING THY SERVANT ACCORDING TO MINE AFFLICTION.
PLAINLY: THOU HAST FORGIVEN THY SERVANT HIS INIQUITY FOR ALL THE NAMES WHICH THY SERVANT DIDST CALL THEE
WHEN THY SERVANT DIDST LEARN THAT THY SERVANT MUST WEARETH A DIAPER ALL THE REST OF THY SERVANT'S DAYS;
THOU HAST CAST THY SERVANT'S FOLLY BEHIND THY
CRINK.
CRINK.

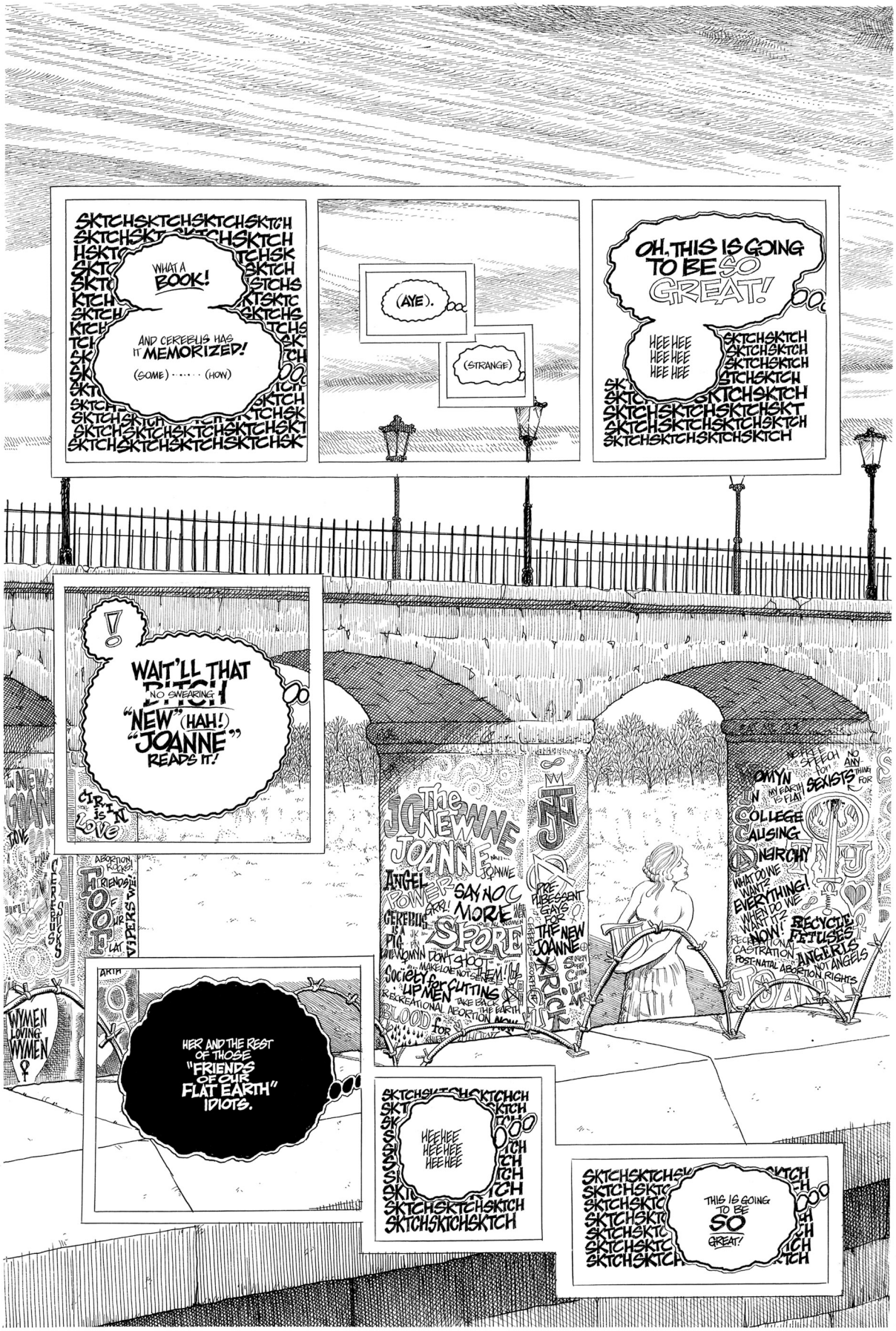

OW! CEREBUS' LOWER BACK.
OW! CEREBUS' UPPER BACK.
OW! CEREBUS' KIDNEYS.
OW! CEREBUS' TAIL-BONE.
OW! CEREBUS' SHOULDER BLADE.
OW

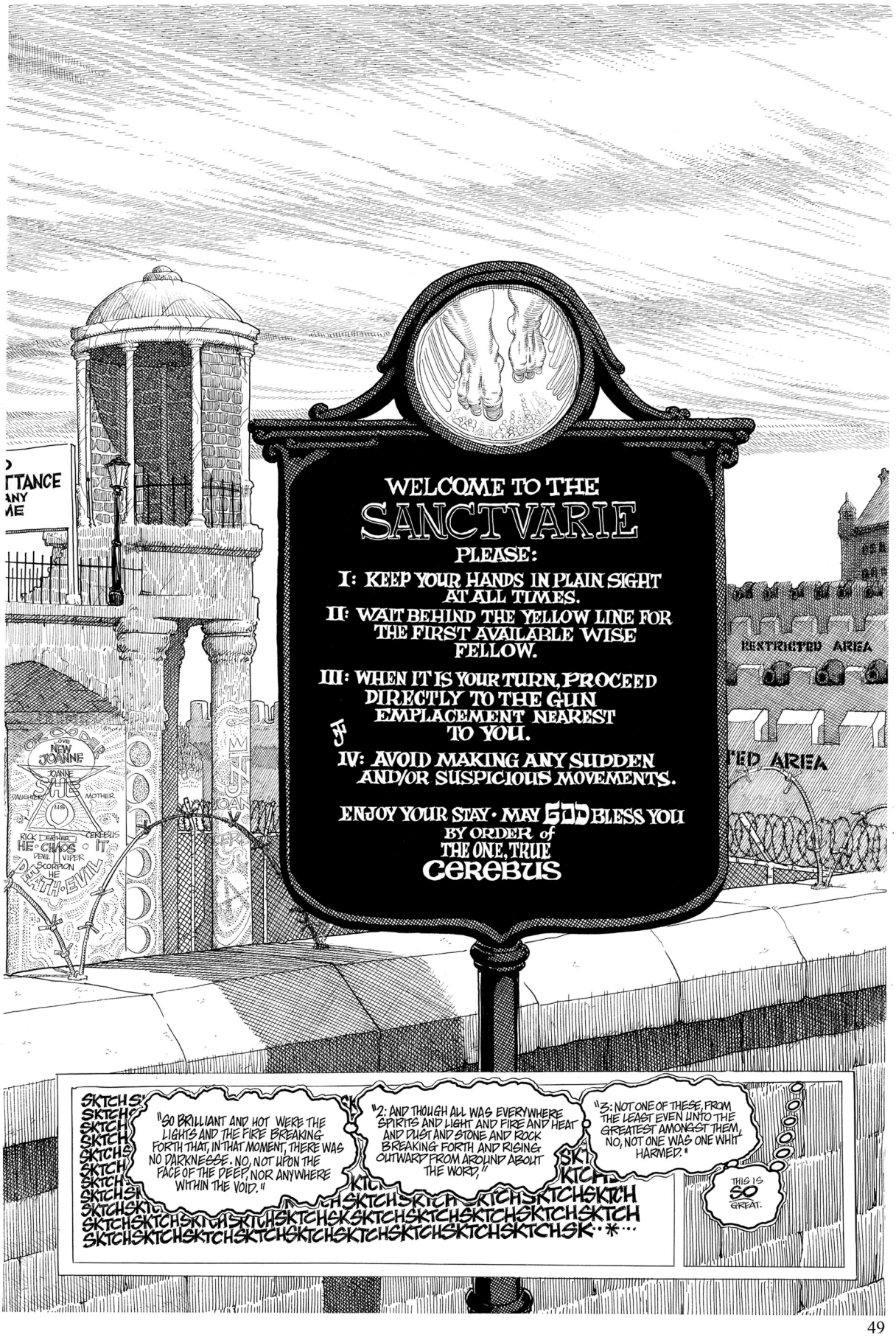

ALMIGHTY GOD
...THY SERVANT CERBERUS IS SORRY SORRY FOR INFERRING THAT THY SERVANT IS FORGIVEN HIS TRANSGRESSION (FOR FORGIVENESS BELONGETH TO GOD ALONE)
?
(AS THY SERVANT DOTH KNOWETH)
(VERILY.) (TIMESETH INFINITY) (DOUBLE STAMPETH IT.)
AND THY SERVANT DOTH THANK THEE FOR THY GRACE AND FOR THY MERCY IN REVEALING THY BOOK UNTO THY SERVANT
(AND THY SERVANT DOTH SINCERELY PROMISETH NEVERMORE TO BRING-ETH UP HIS NAME-CALLING (AS THY SERVANT DIDST ALREADY PROMISE) (ONLY THY SERVANT DIDST FORGET) (BUT VERILY THY SERVANT SHALT NEVERMORE FORGET) (AND THIS TIME, THY SERVANT DOTH REALLY, REALLY MEAN IT (SORRY, SORRY, SORRY) (KISSETH THY SERVANT'S PINKY UP TO EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE)
KISS
WHEW!


CRINK
OW CEREBUS' EAR INFECTION
OW CEREBUS' HEMORRHOIDS
OW CEREBUS' TOOTHACHE
OW CEREBUS' CHARLEY HORSE
OW CEREB COLD SORE
WHAT A BOOK
WHAT A BOOK
WHAT A BOOK
WHAT A BOOK
WHAT A BOOK
CRINK
CRINK
THE PULSE-POUNDING ADVENTURE of the BOTTOM STEP!
Whoop.
WHOOOOA!
UT!
WhOOa!
up.
MUST.
get.
Knee
...have...
HAVE...
...have to GET.
KNEEEEEEE.
THAT'S it THAT'S Thaattttts...
...NNGHHHHHH...
UNH!!
PANT.
PANT.
TO BE CONTINUED!

THE SPINE-TINGLING CONQUEST OF THE SECOND STEP!
JUST.
DON'T LOOK DOWN.
OW! CEREBUS' DIAPER RASH!
FINE. FINE.
JUST. DON'T. LOOK DOWN.
GREAT. GREAT. JUST DON'T. LOOK. DOWN.
OW! CEREBUS' BLOOD BLISTER!
SWELL. SWELL. JUST... ?
(CEREBUS HAS A BLOOD BLISTER?)
(WHERE?)
(IT'S RIGHT DOWN HERE, ON HIS
DON'T LOOK DOWN
DON'T LOOK DOWN
TO BE CONTINUED

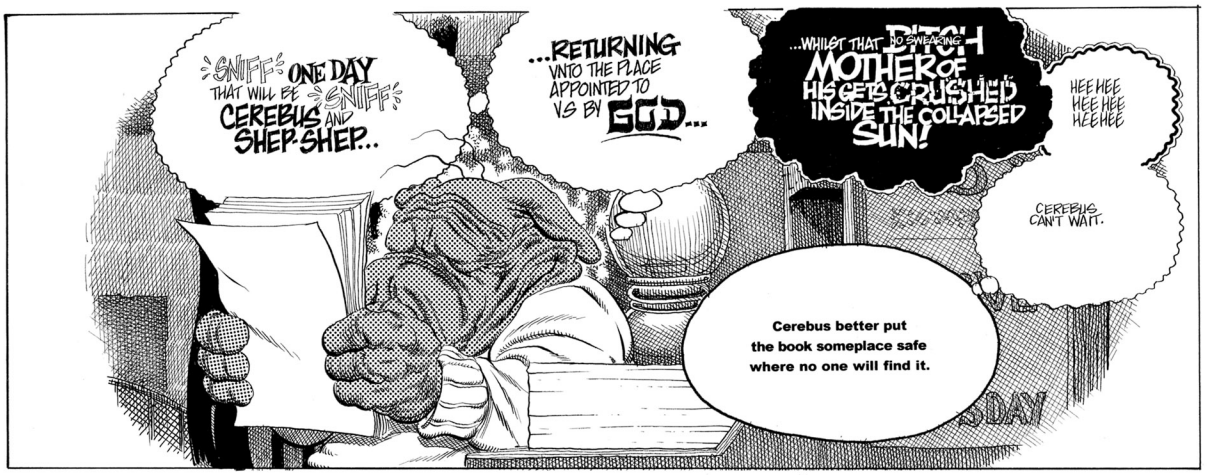
THE SCROTUM-CLENCHING ASCENT to the ...UH...
TO THE UH.
LOOK. LET'S JUST SAY THAT HE MADE IT TO THE TOP OF THE CHAIR AND GET ON WITH THE STORY, EH?
CEREBUS CAN'T BELIEVE HE FINALLY MADE IT TO THE TOP OF HIS CHAIR!
OW! CEREBUS' SCROTUM.
Chapter the First
1: In the beginning GOD brought forth from within Himself His spirit.
2: And the spirit of GOD spake unto GOD saying
WHAT A BOOK.
OW! CEREBUS' WRIST
OW! CEREBUS' FINGER
SKTCH SKTCH SKTCHA SKTCH SKTCH SKTCH SKTCH

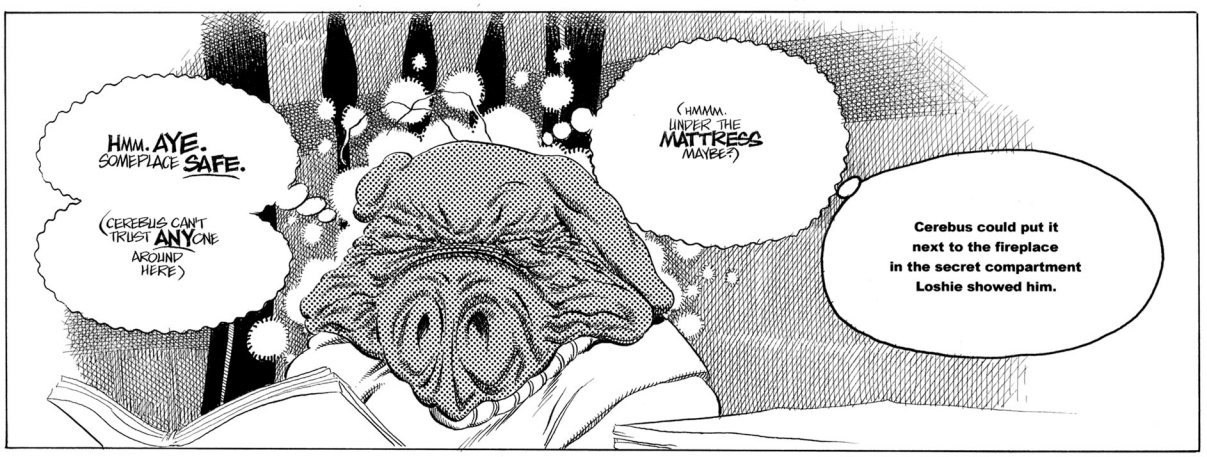

WHAT A BOOK!
AND CEREBUS HAS IT MEMORIZED!
(SOME) ..... (HOW)
(AYE).
(STRANGE)
OH, THIS IS GOING TO BE SO GREAT!
HEE HEE HEE HEE HEE HEE
WAIT'LL THAT BITCH NO SWEARING "NEW" (HAH!) "JOANNE" READS IT!
CIRIN is LOVE
The NEW JOANNE
ANGEL POWER
SAY NO MORE
SPORE
PRE-PUBESSENT GAYS FOR THE NEW JOANNE
WOMYN IN COLLEGE CAUSING ANARCHY
WHAT DO WE WANT? EVERYTHING! WHEN DO WE WANT IT? NOW!
RECYCLE FETUSES
ANGERIS
POST-NATAL ABORTION RIGHTS
FOOF
WYMEN LOVING WYMEN
HER AND THE REST OF THOSE "FRIENDS OF OUR FLAT EARTH" IDIOTS.
HEE HEE HEE HEE HEE HEE
THIS IS GOING TO BE SO GREAT!

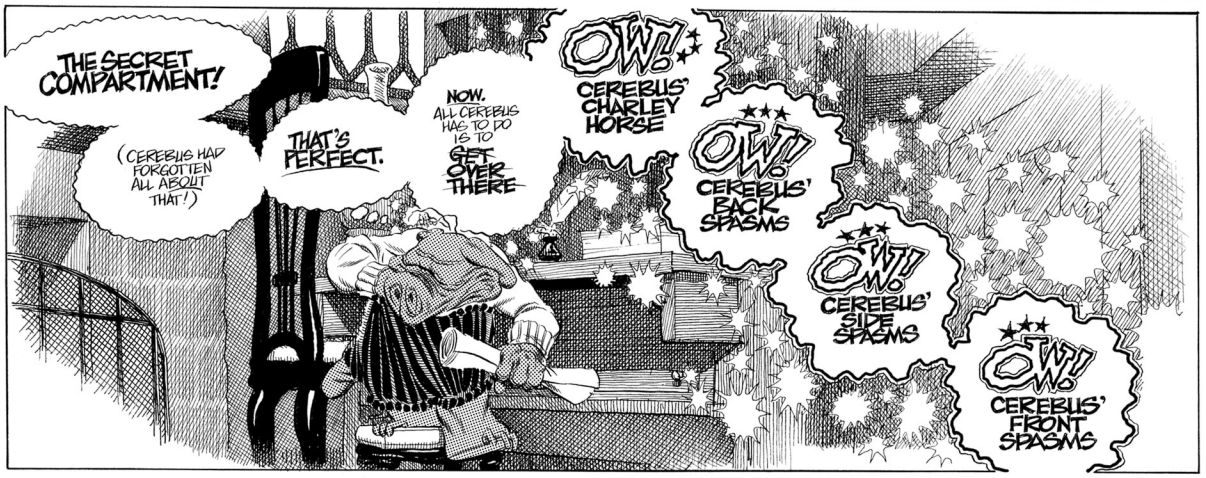

WELCOME TO THE
SANCTVARIE
PLEASE:
I: KEEP YOUR HANDS IN PLAIN SIGHT AT ALL TIMES.
II: WAIT BEHIND THE YELLOW LINE FOR THE FIRST AVAILABLE WISE FELLOW.
III: WHEN IT IS YOUR TURN, PROCEED DIRECTLY TO THE GUN EMPLACEMENT NEAREST TO YOU.
IV: AVOID MAKING ANY SUDDEN AND/OR SUSPICIOUS MOVEMENTS.
ENJOY YOUR STAY · MAY GOD BLESS YOU
BY ORDER of
THE ONE, TRUE
Cerebus
RESTRICTED AREA
"SO BRILLIANT AND HOT WERE THE LIGHTS AND THE FIRE BREAKING FORTH THAT, IN THAT MOMENT, THERE WAS NO DARKNESSE. NO, NOT UPON THE FACE OF THE DEEP, NOR ANYWHERE WITHIN THE VOID."
"2: AND THOUGH ALL WAS EVERYWHERE SPIRITS AND LIGHT AND FIRE AND HEAT AND DUST AND STONE AND ROCK BREAKING FORTH AND RISING OUTWARD FROM AROUND ABOUT THE WORD,"
"3: NOT ONE OF THESE, FROM THE LEAST EVEN UNTO THE GREATEST AMONGST THEM, NO, NOT ONE WAS ONE WHIT HARMED."
THIS IS SO GREAT.

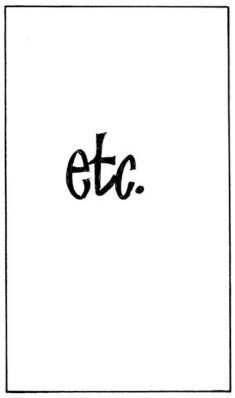
SKTCH
and journey no more unto that topmost layer but, instead, be drawn down and in, within the hottest of the fire; drawn nigh, at last, unto the Word.
Chapter the Fourth
1: Know ye as well, O
?
WAAAAIT A SECOND.
THIS. IS IT.
THIS. IS WHAT CEREBUS PRAYED FOR!
THIS BOOK IS THE BEGINNING OF THE CEREBUS FAMILY DYNASTRY CEREBUS HAS BEEN DREAMING OF FOR FIFTY YEARS!
THIS SNIFF
THIS WILL BE CEREBUS' SNIFF OWN B-B-BELOVED BOY CHOKE SNIFF SHEP'S BOOK....
HM. AYE.
ALL CEREBUS HAS TO DO IS TO CHANGE "KNOW YE AS WELL, O CEREBUS" INTO "KNOW YE AS WELL, O SON OF...."
KRAK TAKA
THOOM
HM.
MAYBE CEREBUS WILL JUST LEAVE IT AS "O CEREBUS" FOR RIGHT NOW

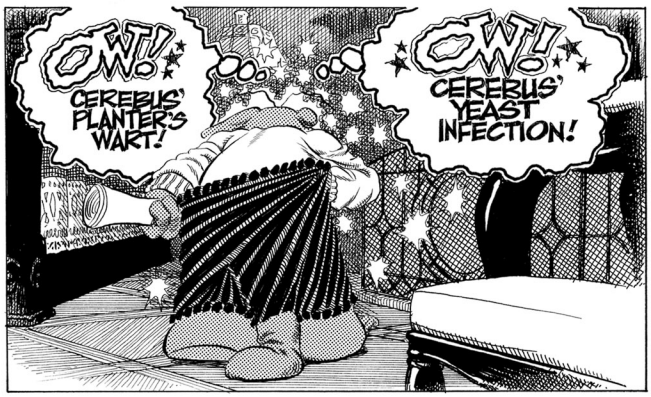
AND...AND SNIFF CEREBUS W-WILL BE ON THE B-B-BOXES OF UNFINISHED (SNIFFLE) WOOD...
"ALL THE WEIGHTLESS NUMBERLESS SPIRITS SOARING FREE UPON THE FACE OF THE DEEP, GOING AND JOURNEYING THROUGH THE NIGHT AND THROUGH THE STARS,"
BEAMING PISH-PSH PROUDLY DOWN AT SHEPSHEP SNIFF SOB BLUBBER WHOSE V-V-VOICE SNIFF FILLS THE SANCTUARY!
"AT LAST, BREAKING FORTH UPON THOSE MOST DISTANT AND PRISTINE EXPANSES OF THE INFINITE NIGHT."
EV-EVERYONE SOOOO T-TOUCHED B-BY THE TEN-TEN-TENDER L-L-LOVE OF A F-F-F-F-FATHER F-FOR H-H-HIS S-S-SON! BAWL
"WEIGHTLESS, NUMBERLESS SPIRITS, COMING AT LAST, IN THEIR MULTITUDES BEYOND NUMBERING"

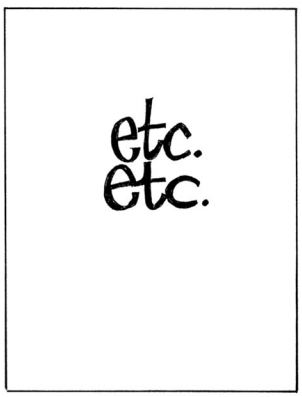

SNIFF ONE DAY THAT WILL BE SNIFF CEREBUS AND SHEP SHEP...
...RETURNING VNTO THE PLACE APPOINTED TO VS BY GOD...
...WHILST THAT (NO SWEARING) BITCH MOTHER OF HIS GETS CRUSHED INSIDE THE COLLAPSED SUN!
HEE HEE HEE HEE HEE
CEREBUS CAN'T WAIT.
Cerebus better put the book someplace safe where no one will find it.
SDAY

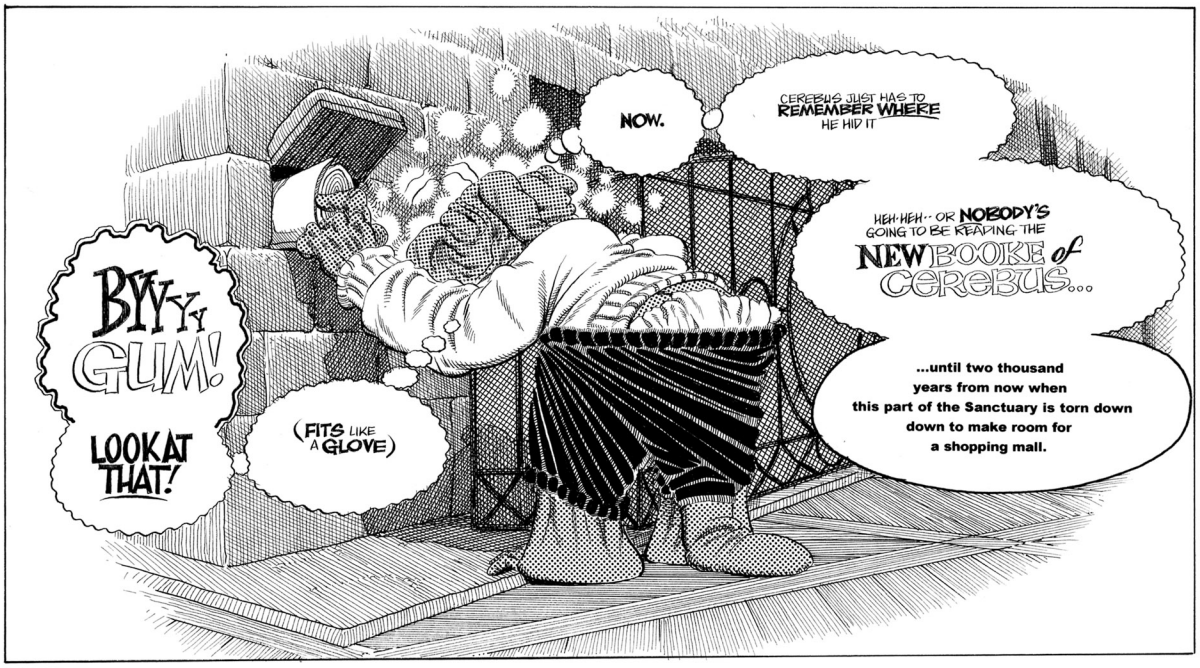

HMM. AYE. SOMEPLACE SAFE.
(CEREBUS CAN'T TRUST ANYONE AROUND HERE)
(HMMM. UNDER THE MATTRESS MAYBE?)
Cerebus could put it next to the fireplace in the secret compartment Loshie showed him.


THE SECRET COMPARTMENT!
(CEREBUS HAD FORGOTTEN ALL ABOUT THAT!)
THAT'S PERFECT.
NOW. ALL CEREBUS HAS TO DO IS TO GET OVER THERE
OW! CEREBUS' CHARLEY HORSE
OW! CEREBUS' BACK SPASMS
OW! CEREBUS' SIDE SPASMS
OW! CEREBUS' FRONT SPASMS


etc.

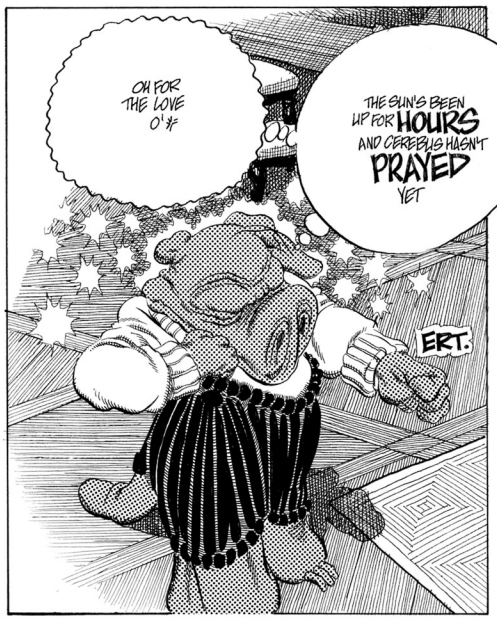

OW! CEREBUS' PLANTER'S WART!
OW! CEREBUS' YEAST INFECTION!

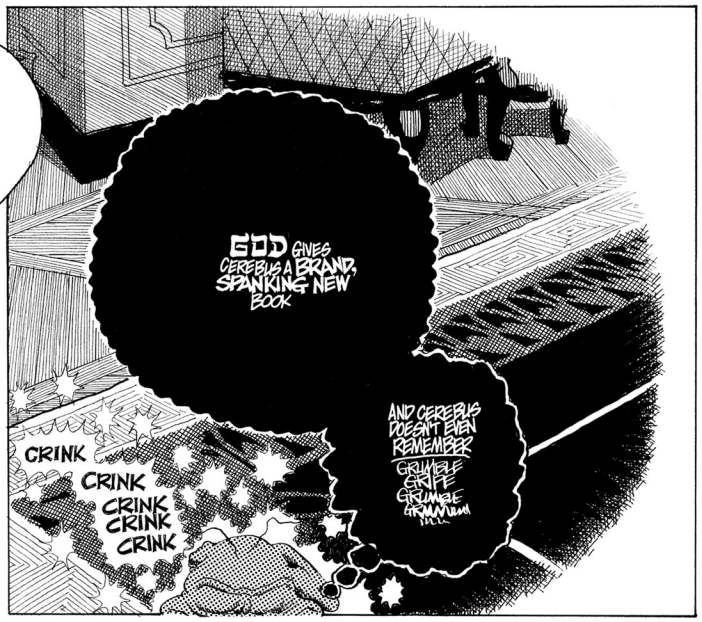

etc.
etc.


NOW.
CEREBUS JUST HAS TO REMEMBER WHERE HE HID IT
BYYY GUM!
LOOK AT THAT!
(FITS LIKE A GLOVE)
HEH-HEH-- OR NOBODY'S GOING TO BE READING THE NEW BOOKE of CEREBUS...
...until two thousand years from now when this part of the Sanctuary is torn down down to make room for a shopping mall.

KLEP.

GOOD THING CEREBUS DIDN'T ACTUALLY HEAR HIMSELF THINK THAT LAST PART....
...OR CEREBUS WOULD THINK HE WAS LOSING HIS MIND.
CRINK
CRINK


OH FOR THE LOVE O'#
THE SUN'S BEEN UP FOR HOURS AND CEREBUS HASN'T PRAYED YET
ERT.

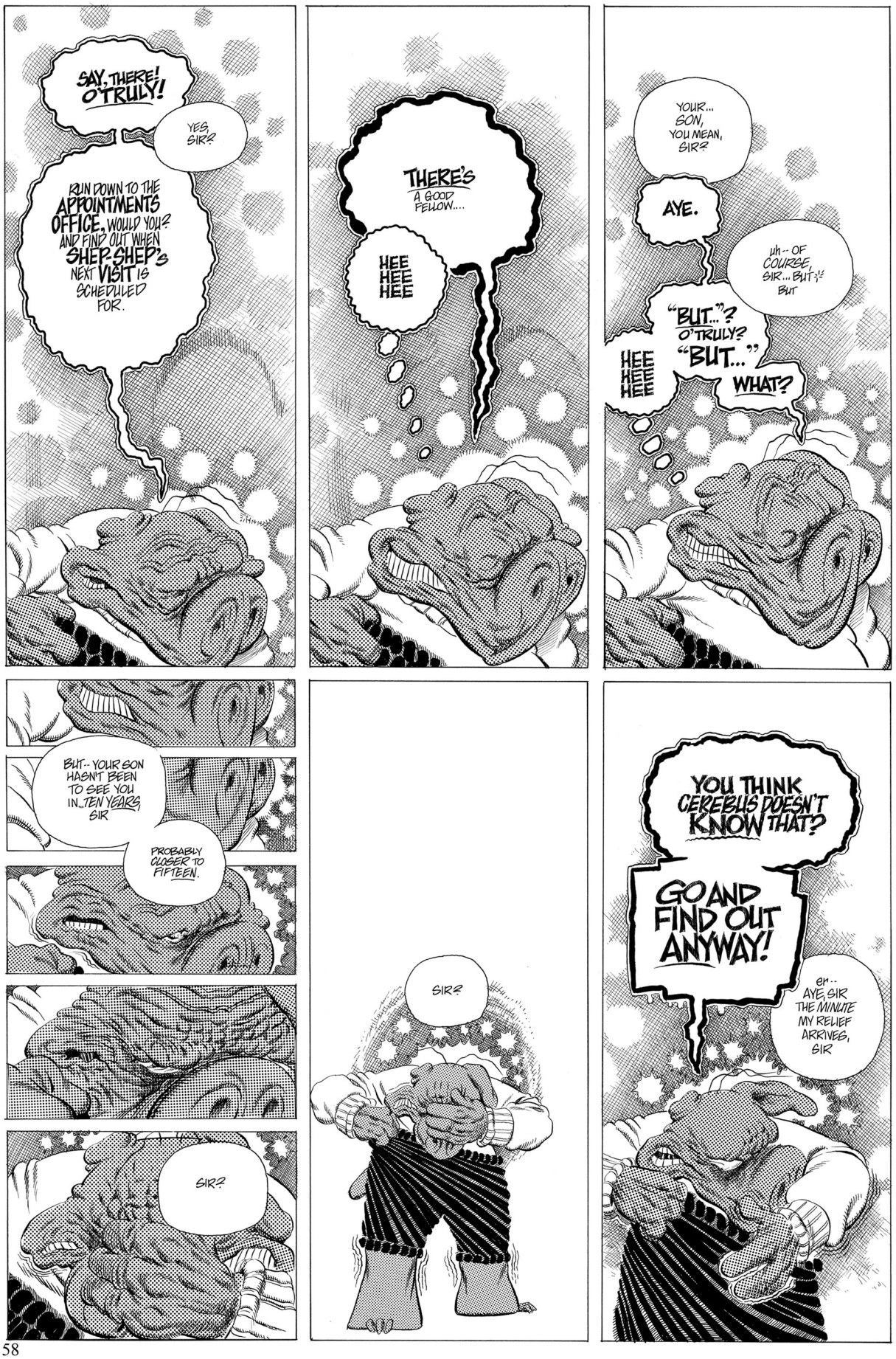

GOD GIVES CEREBUS A BRAND, SPANKING NEW BOOK
AND CEREBUS DOESN'T EVEN REMEMBER
GRUMBLE GRUFF GRUMBLE GRUMBLE
CRINK
CRINK
CRINK
CRINK
CRINK

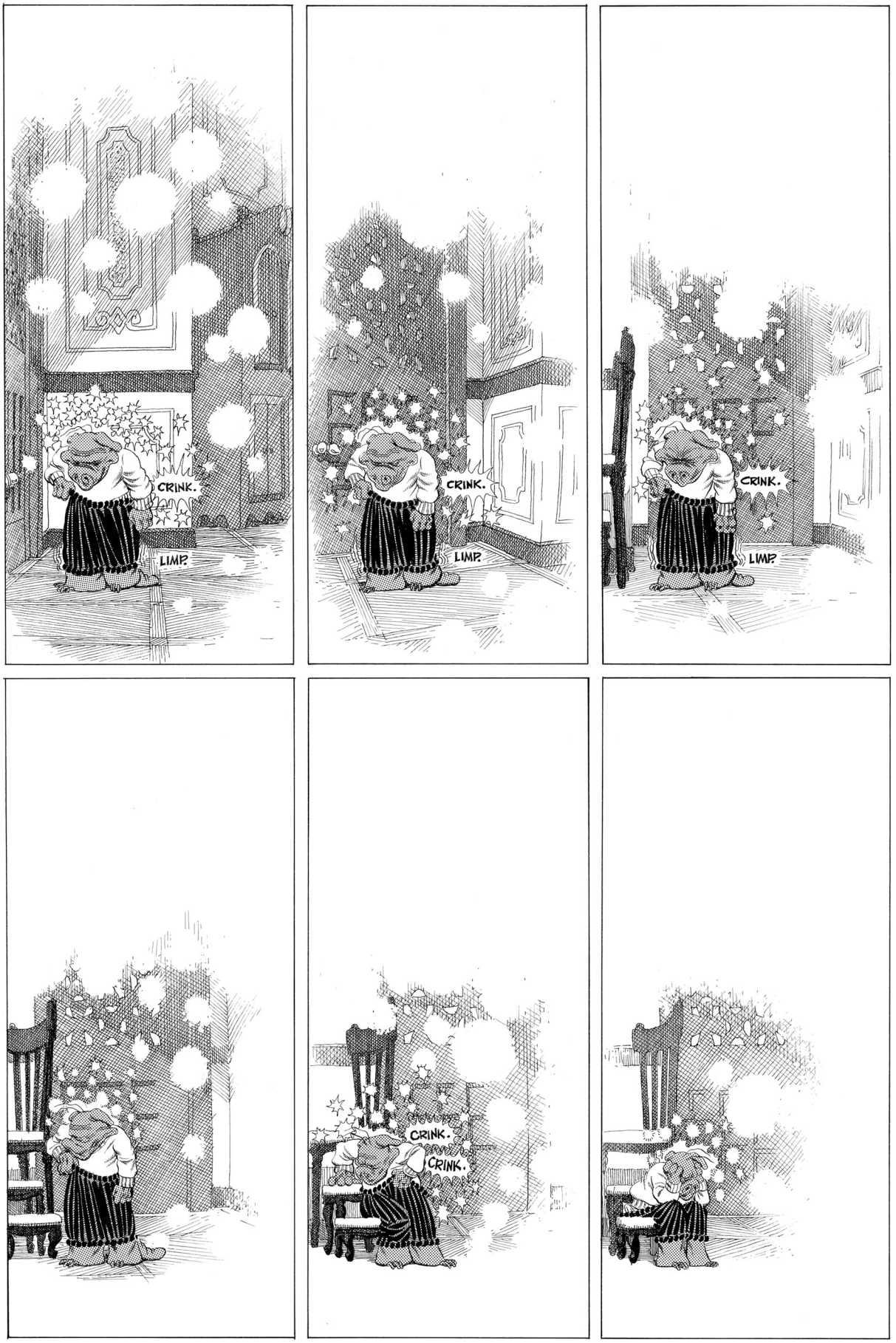
KLAK
?
KLAK
KLAK
KLAK
KLAK
KLAK
HEY!
YESSIR?
GAH!
WHO ARE YOU?
AND WHAT ARE YOU DOING RIGHT OUTSIDE CEREBUS' DOOR?
I'M YOUR CHIEF OF SECURITY, SIR
THIS IS MY POST.

OH.
AYE.
OF COURSE.
OW CEREBUS' BACK
OW CEREBUS' HAMSTRING
OW CEREBUS' OTHER HAMSTRING
IF YOU DON'T MIND UN-LOCKING THE DOOR
CEREBUS WANTS TO GO AND
NO CAN DO, SIR.
WHATZAT? SPEAK UP.
NO CAN DO, SIR! THE ENTIRE SANCTUARY SECTOR IS IN MANDATORY LOCKDOWN! ALL NON-SECURITY PERSONNEL CONFINED TO QUARTERS UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE! WE'RE IN A HEIGHTENED CODE RED ALERT
"A HEIGHTENED" WHAT?
HEIGHTENED CODE RED ALERT, SIR! NO ONE IN, NO ONE OUT!
OUR INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATES ESTIMATE THAT THE PROBABILITY RATING FOR A JOANNIST ATTACK ON A CEREBITE
YOU DON'T HAVE TO YELL.
CEREBUS IS RIGHT HERE.
TARGET HAS INCREASED BY THREE POINT SEVEN JUST SINCE LAST NIGHT!
TO...?
EIGHT POINT FIVE.
FROM...?
FOUR POINT EIGHT, SIR.
ON A SCALE OF...?
ONE TO EIGHT POINT SIX

UP FROM FOUR POINT... ...EIGHT
TO EIGHT POINT... ...FIVE
ON A SCALE... ....OF....
Flap.
ALL RIGHT.
GUM GUM GUM GUM
CEREBUS WILL PRAY IN HERE (FOR NOW)
THANK YOU uhhh
THANK YOU uhhhhh?
O'REILLY, SIR
WALTER O'REILLY
HMMMM
WALTER
O'REILLY
Heh Heh HEH
CEREBUS KNOWS HOW HE'LL REMEMBER THAT ONE

"WATER?"
"OH, REALLY?"
OH, YES SIR.
THAT'S A FUNNY ONE
A REAL KNEE-SLAPPER AS YOU WOULD SAY, SIR.
Know-it-all SMART MOUTH YOUNG PUNK
THINKS CEREBUS IS SOME... SOME..... DODDERING OLD FOOL
PSST CEREBUS DIDN'T KNOW THE NAME OF HIS OWN CHIEF OF SENILITY
CEREBUS IS A DODDERING OLD
SHUT UP.
CEREBUS WILL SHOW HIM. CEREBUS WILL ...CEREBUS WILL...
CEREBUS WILL WHAT?
CEREBUS DOESN'T KNOW.
OH, WAIT! YES CEREBUS DOES! CEREBUS WILL TAKE HIM DOWN A FEW PEGS...
HA! THAT'S IT.
CEREBUS WILL TAKE HIM DOWN. A. FEW. PEGS.
LET'S SEE HOW THE CHIEF OF SENILITY LIKES BEING A MERE (HA!) ERRAND BOY


SAY, THERE! O'TRULY!
YES, SIR?
RUN DOWN TO THE APPOINTMENTS OFFICE, WOULD YOU? AND FIND OUT WHEN SHEP-SHEP'S NEXT VISIT IS SCHEDULED FOR.
THERE'S A GOOD FELLOW....
HEE HEE HEE
YOUR... SON, YOU MEAN, SIR?
AYE.
UH-- OF COURSE, SIR... BUT-- BUT
"BUT..."? O'TRULY? "BUT..."
HEE HEE HEE
WHAT?
BUT-- YOUR SON HASN'T BEEN TO SEE YOU IN...TEN YEARS, SIR
PROBABLY CLOSER TO FIFTEEN.
SIR?
SIR?
YOU THINK CEREBUS DOESN'T KNOW THAT?
GO AND FIND OUT ANYWAY!
EH... AYE, SIR THE MINUTE MY RELIEF ARRIVES, SIR


CRINK.
LIMP.
CRINK.
LIMP.
CRINK.
LIMP.
CRINK.
CRINK.

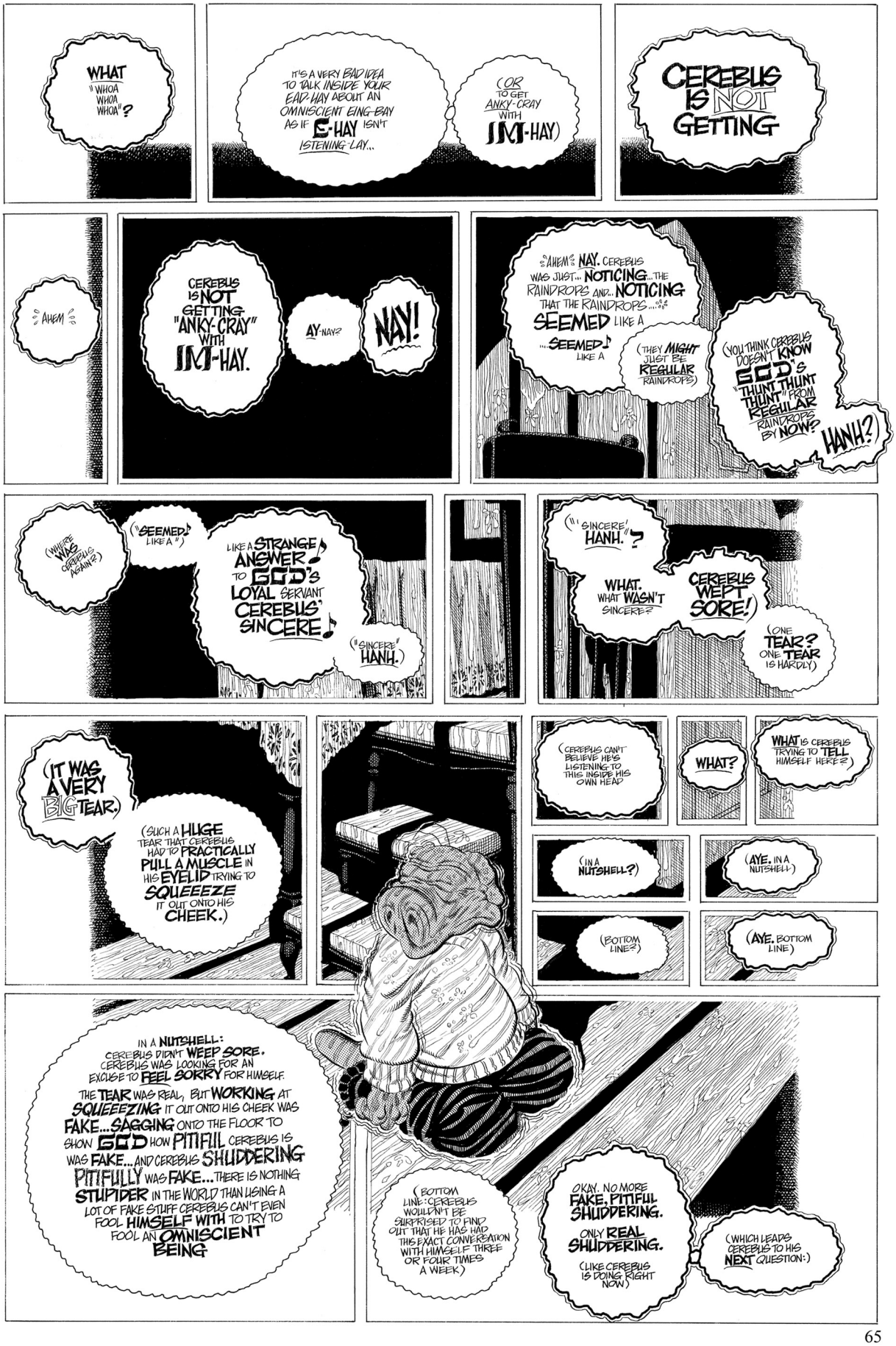
OW!
CEREBUS' HEART.

OW
GOD!

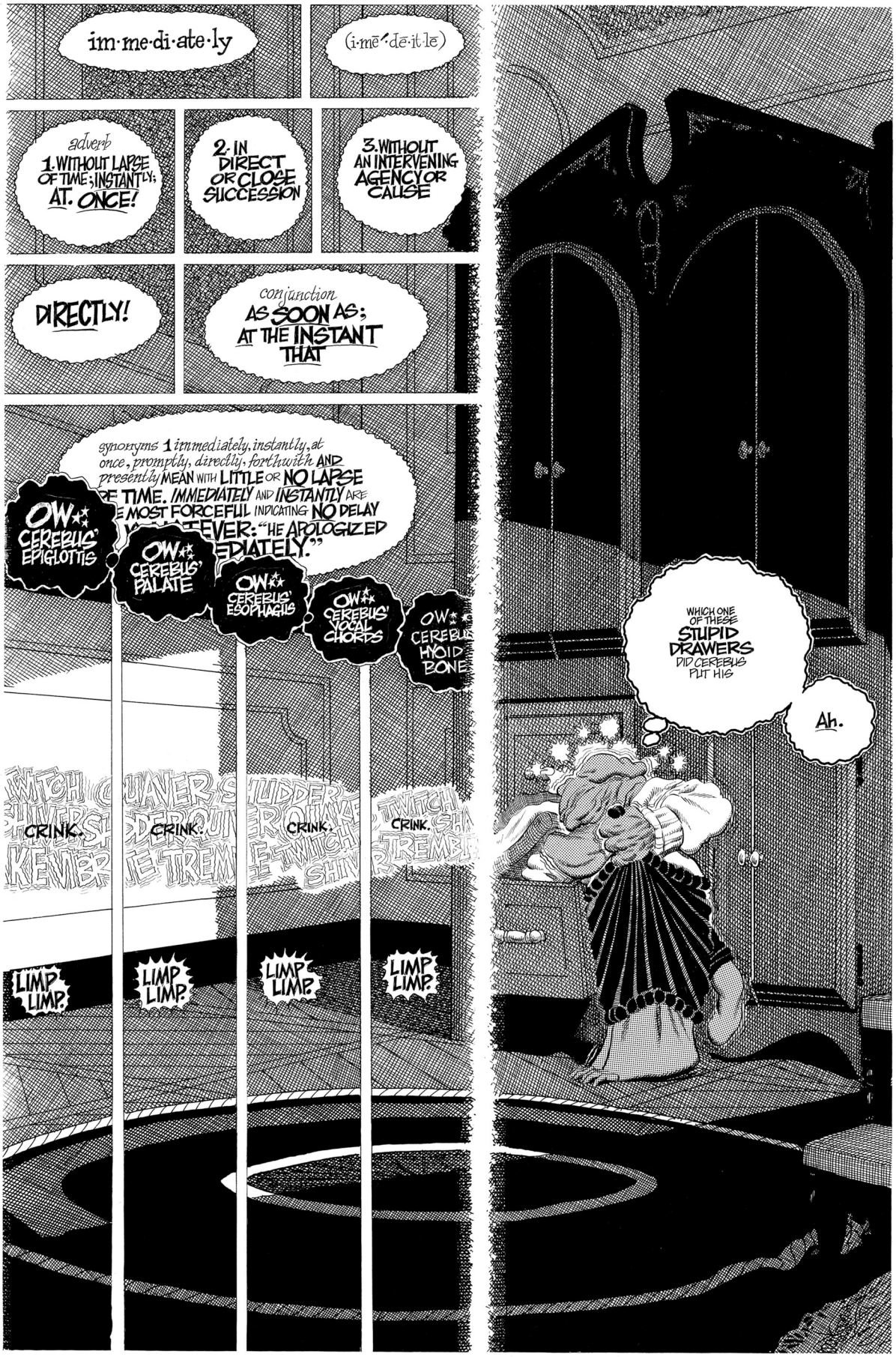
"DUKE" LEONARDI'S
GRISLY BEER
IF IT'S A PAW IT'S A GRISLY
"DUKE" LEONARDI'S
GRISLY BEER
CASE of 24 BOTTLES
GRISLY BEER
PLEASE GOD!
CEREBUS IS OLD!
CEREBUS DOESN'T REMEMBER WHAT HAPPENED
WITH SHEP.
SHEP.

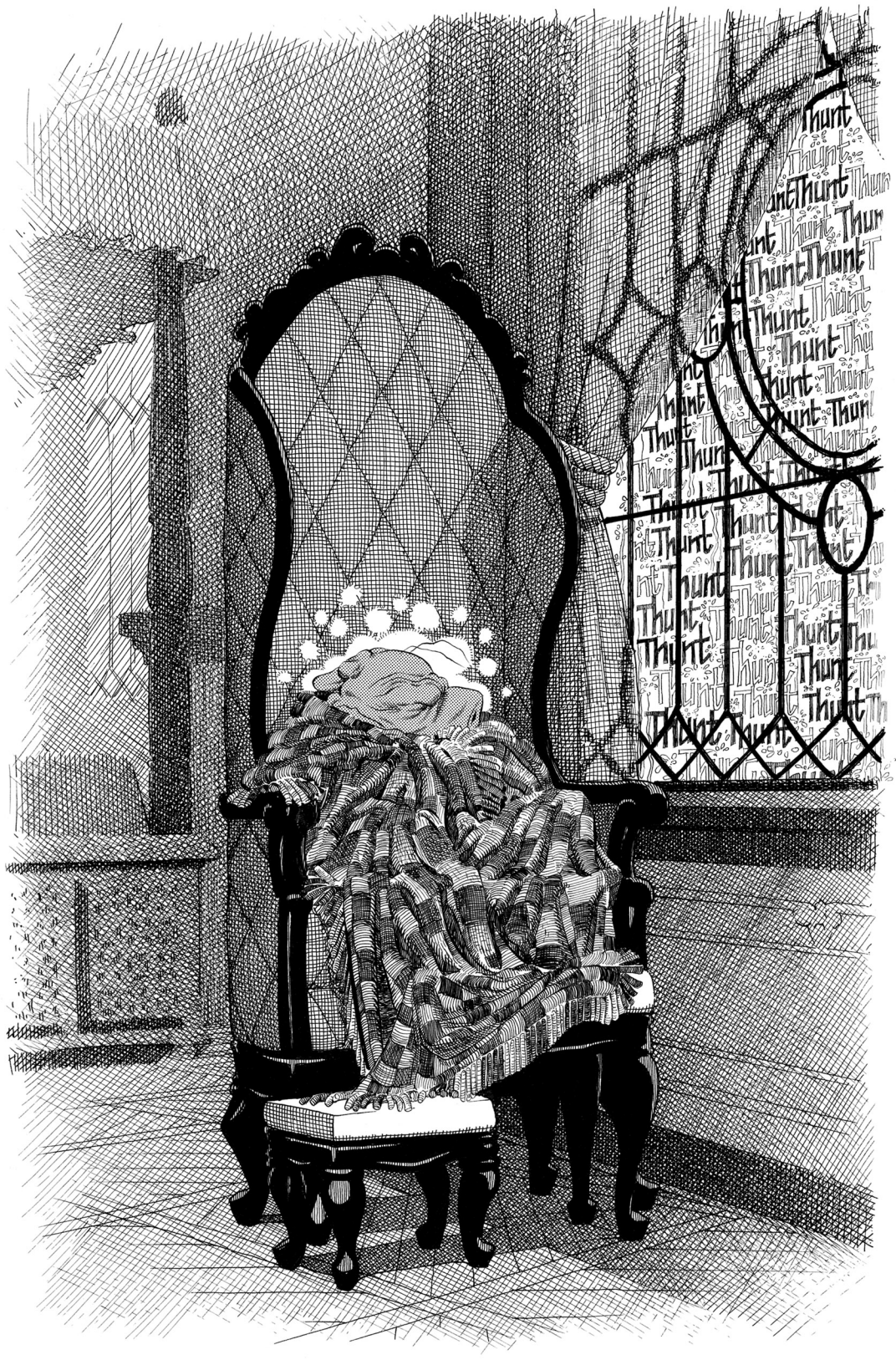
PLEASE!
PLEASE BRING HIM BACK
PLEASE GOD THAT'S ALL CEREBUS ASKS OF
Thunt.

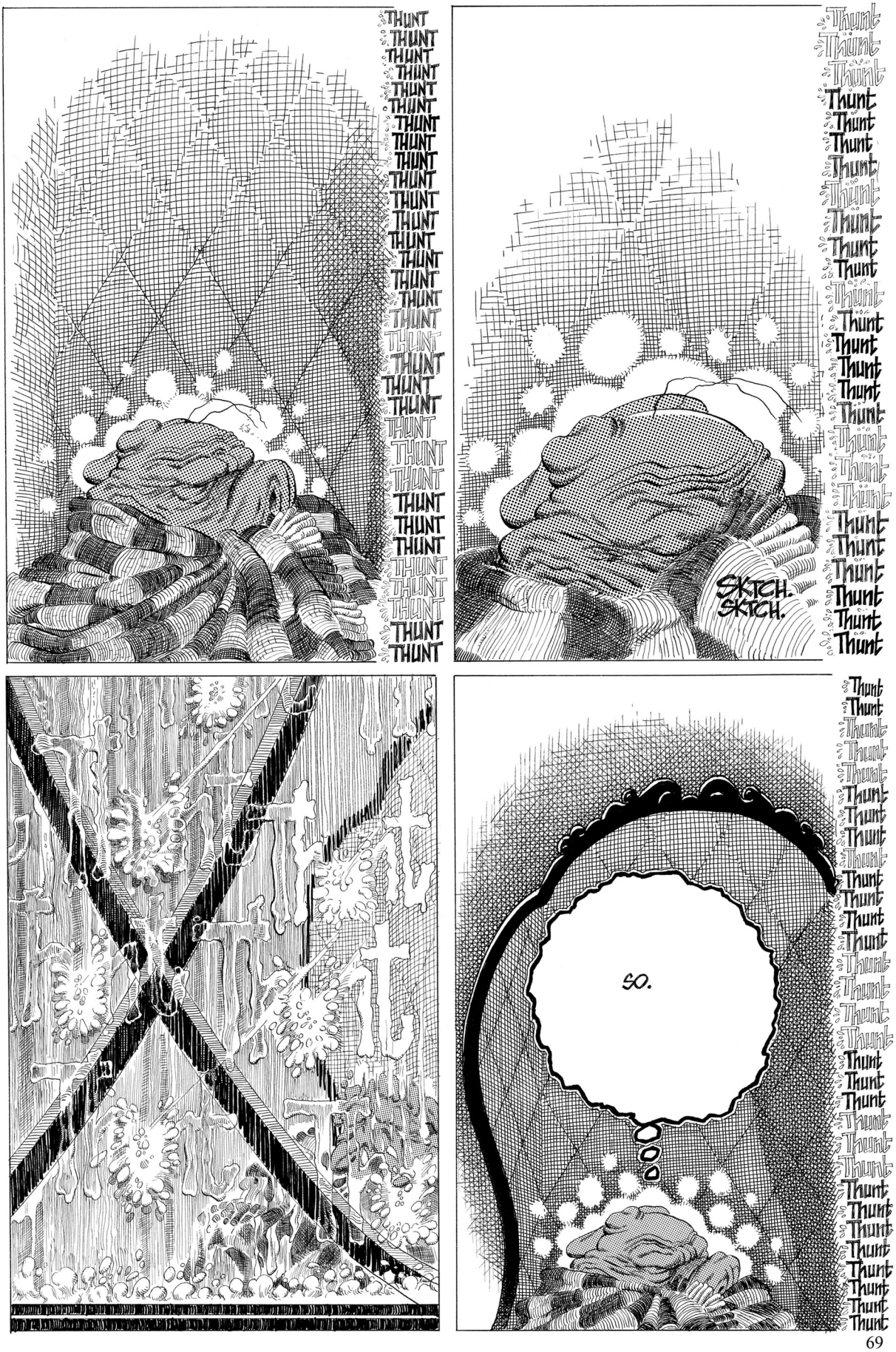
?
OW! CEREBUS' NECK.
OW! CEREBUS' BACK.
OW! CEREBUS'
Thunt
Thunt
Thunt
Thunt
Thunt
Thunt
Thunt
Thunt
Thunt Thunt
Thunt Thunt
Thunt
Thunt Thunt
Thunt
THUNT THUNT THUNT?
CEREBUS BEGS GOD TO BRING BACK SHEP-SHEP?
AND ALL CEREBUS GETS IS LOUSY RAINDROPS GOING...?
WHOA WHOA WHOA

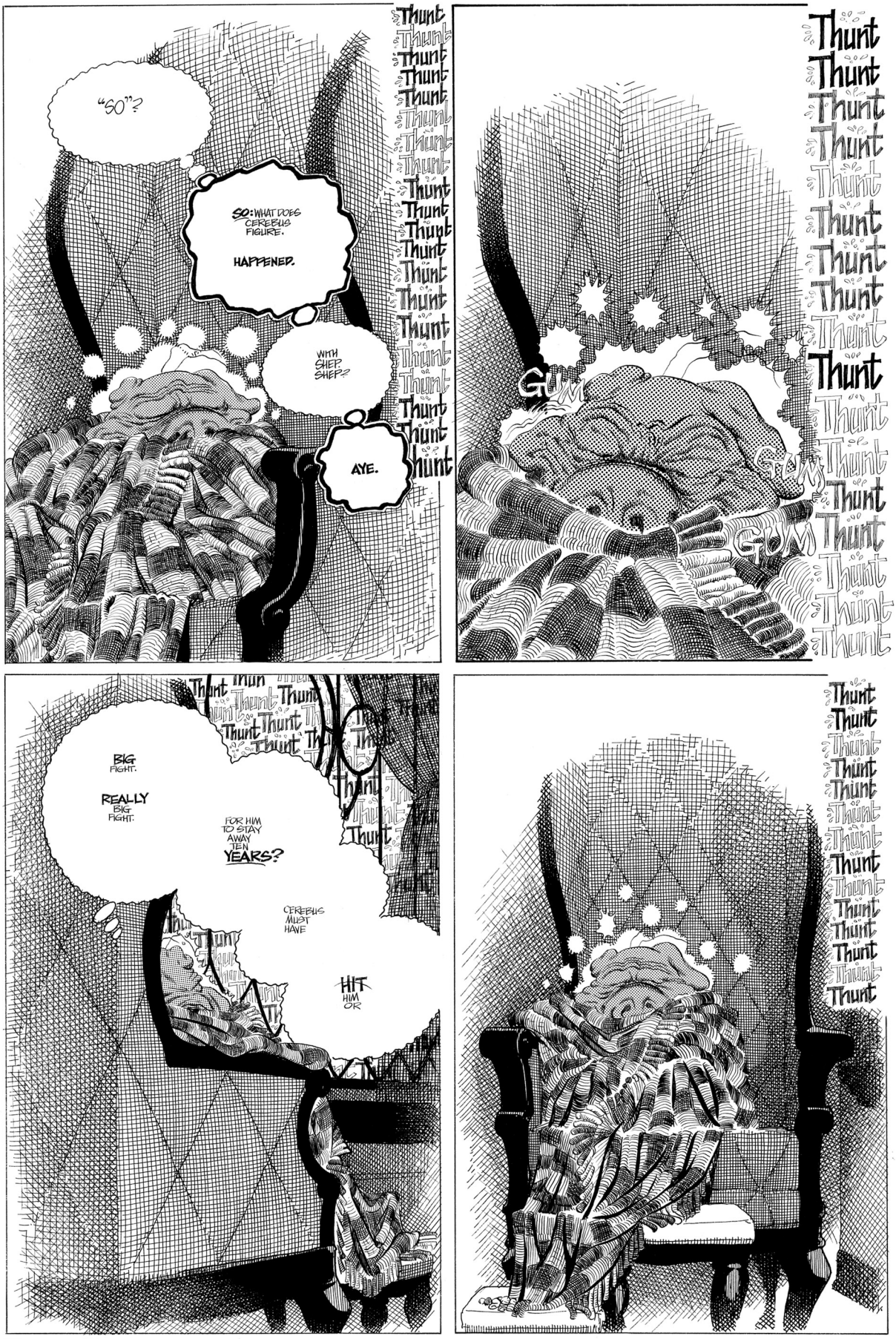

WHAT "WHOA WHOA WHOA"?
IT'S A VERY BAD IDEA TO TALK INSIDE YOUR EAD-HAY ABOUT AN OMNISCIENT EING-BAY AS IF E-HAY ISN'T ISTENING-LAY...
(OR TO GET ANKY-CRAY WITH JM-HAY)
CEREBUS IS NOT GETTING
AHEM
CEREBUS IS NOT GETTING "ANKY-CRAY" WITH JM-HAY.
AY-NAY?
NAY!
AHEM. NAY. CEREBUS WAS JUST... NOTICING... THE RAINDROPS AND... NOTICING THAT THE RAINDROPS... SEEMED LIKE A
...SEEMED♪ LIKE A
(THEY MIGHT JUST BE REGULAR RAINDROPS)
(YOU THINK CEREBUS DOESN'T KNOW GOD'S "THUNT THUNT THUNT" FROM REGULAR RAINDROPS BY NOW?
HANH?)
(WHERE WAS CEREBUS AGAIN?)
("SEEMED♪ LIKE A")
LIKE A STRANGE ANSWER♪ TO GOD'S LOYAL SERVANT CEREBUS' SINCERE♪
("SINCERE" HANH.)
("SINCERE" HANH.?
WHAT. WHAT WASN'T SINCERE?
CEREBUS WEPT SORE!)
(ONE TEAR? ONE TEAR IS HARDLY)
(IT WAS A VERY BIG TEAR.)
(SUCH A HUGE TEAR THAT CEREBUS HAD TO PRACTICALLY PULL A MUSCLE IN HIS EYELID TRYING TO SQUEEEZE IT OUT ONTO HIS CHEEK.)
(CEREBUS CAN'T BELIEVE HE'S LISTENING TO THIS INSIDE HIS OWN HEAD)
WHAT?
WHAT IS CEREBUS TRYING TO TELL HIMSELF HERE?)
(IN A NUTSHELL?)
(AYE. IN A NUTSHELL)
(BOTTOM LINE?)
(AYE. BOTTOM LINE)
IN A NUTSHELL: CEREBUS DIDN'T WEEP SORE. CEREBUS WAS LOOKING FOR AN EXCUSE TO FEEL SORRY FOR HIMSELF. THE TEAR WAS REAL, BUT WORKING AT SQUEEEZING IT OUT ONTO HIS CHEEK WAS FAKE... SAGGING ONTO THE FLOOR TO SHOW GOD HOW PITIFUL CEREBUS IS WAS FAKE... AND CEREBUS SHUDDERING PITIFULLY WAS FAKE... THERE IS NOTHING STUPIDER IN THE WORLD THAN USING A LOT OF FAKE STUFF CEREBUS CAN'T EVEN FOOL HIMSELF WITH TO TRY TO FOOL AN OMNISCIENT BEING
(BOTTOM LINE: CEREBUS WOULDN'T BE SURPRISED TO FIND OUT THAT HE HAS HAD THIS EXACT CONVERSATION WITH HIMSELF THREE OR FOUR TIMES A WEEK)
OKAY. NO MORE FAKE, PITIFUL SHUDDERING. ONLY REAL SHUDDERING. (LIKE CEREBUS IS DOING RIGHT NOW)
(WHICH LEADS CEREBUS TO HIS NEXT QUESTION:)

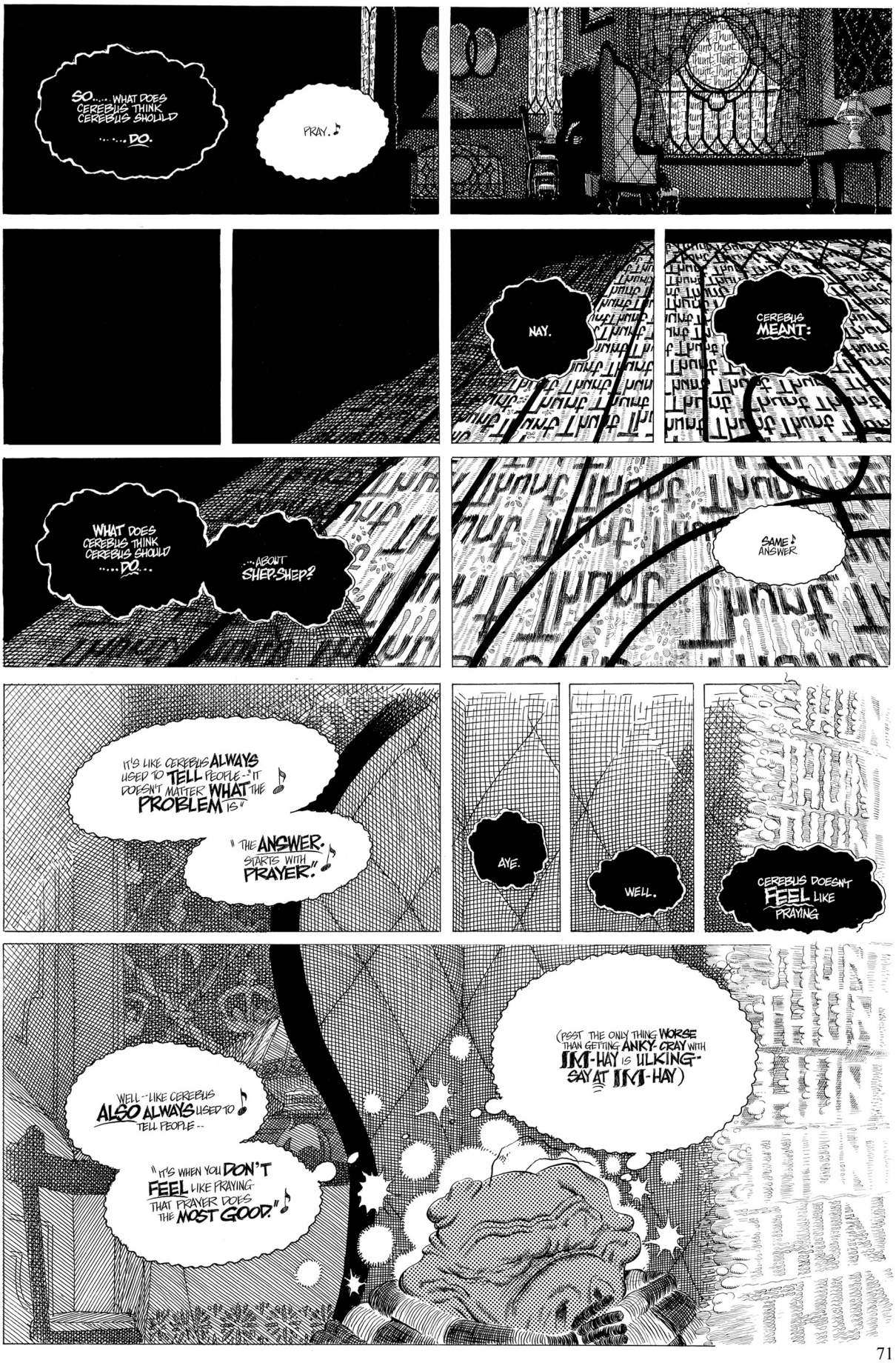
WHY.
IS IT SO
FUCKING
COLD
IN HERE?
OH THAT'S GREAT.
THAT'S JUST SWELL.
CEREBUS KNOWS HOW MUCH GOD JUST LOVES TO HEAR CEREBUS USE THE "F" WORD.
(ESPECIALLY WHEN CEREBUS JUST - YOU KNOW - MUTTERS IT UNDER HIS BREATH LIKE THAT)
FORTUNATELY CEREBUS IS GOING TO APOLOGIZE TO GOD IMMEDIATELY
SO CEREBUS DOESN'T HAVE TO SPEND THE REST OF HIS LIFE WONDERING WHEN AND HOW
OW CEREBUS' UVULA.
OW CEREBUS' TONSILS.
OW CEREBUS' PHARYNX.
OW CEREBUS' LARYNX.
SHAKE
CRINK.
CRINK.
CRINK.
LIMP
LIMP.
LIMP.
LIMP.
LIMP.
LIMP.

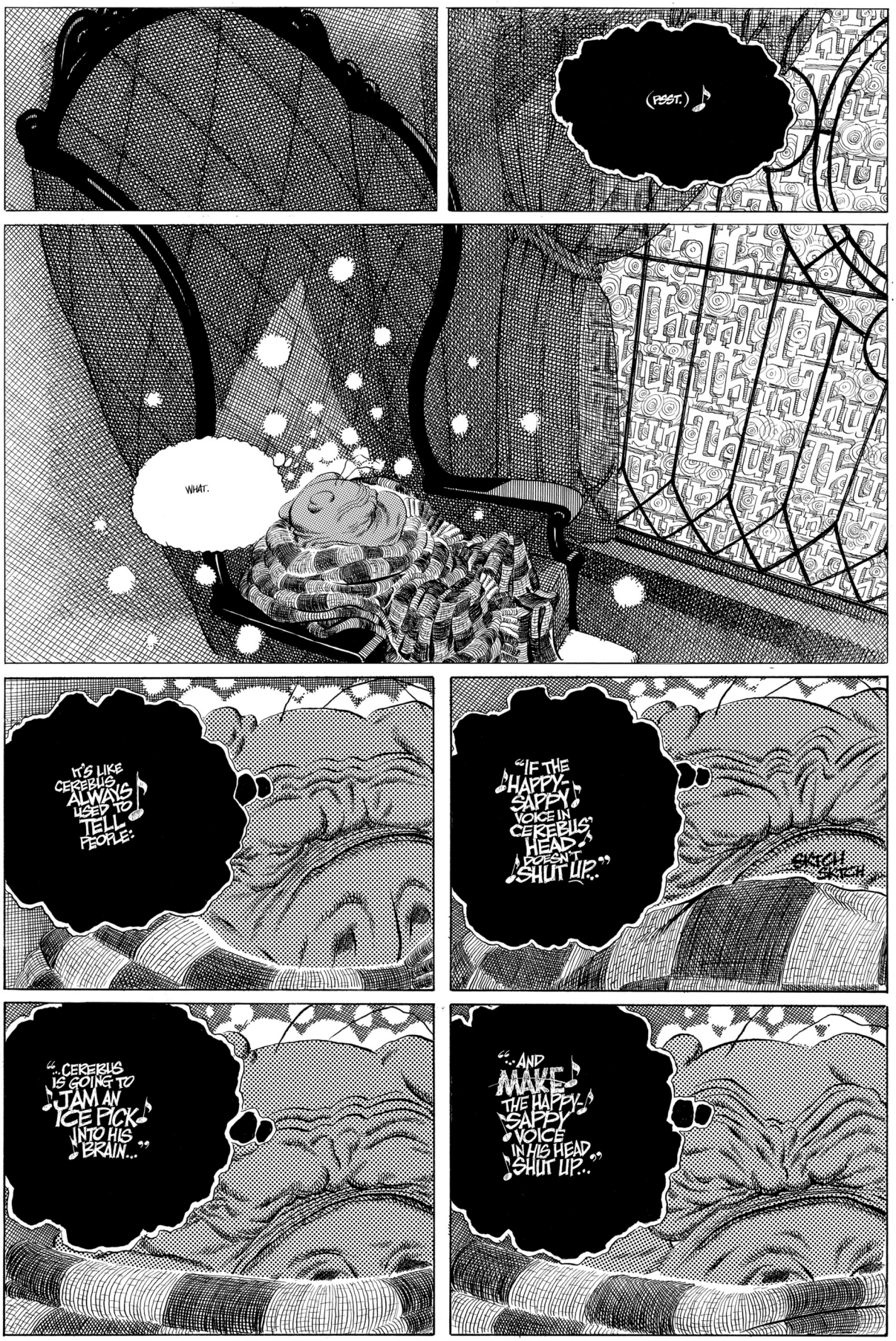

im·me·di·ate·ly
(i·mē'·dē·it·lē)
adverb
1. WITHOUT LAPSE OF TIME; INSTANTLY; AT. ONCE!
2. IN DIRECT OR CLOSE SUCCESSION
3. WITHOUT AN INTERVENING AGENCY OR CAUSE
DIRECTLY!
conjunction
AS SOON AS; AT THE INSTANT THAT
synonyms 1 immediately, instantly, at once, promptly, directly, forthwith AND presently MEAN WITH LITTLE OR NO LAPSE TIME. IMMEDIATELY AND INSTANTLY ARE MOST FORCEFUL INDICATING NO DELAY EVER: "HE APOLOGIZED EDIATELY."
OW CEREBUS' EPIGLOTTIS
OW CEREBUS' PALATE
OW CEREBUS' ESOPHAGUS
OW CEREBUS' VOCAL CHORDS
OW CEREBUS HYOID BONE
CRINK.
CRINK.
CRINK.
CRINK.
LIMP LIMP.
LIMP LIMP.
LIMP LIMP.
LIMP LIMP.
WHICH ONE OF THESE STUPID DRAWERS DID CEREBUS PUT HIS
Ah.

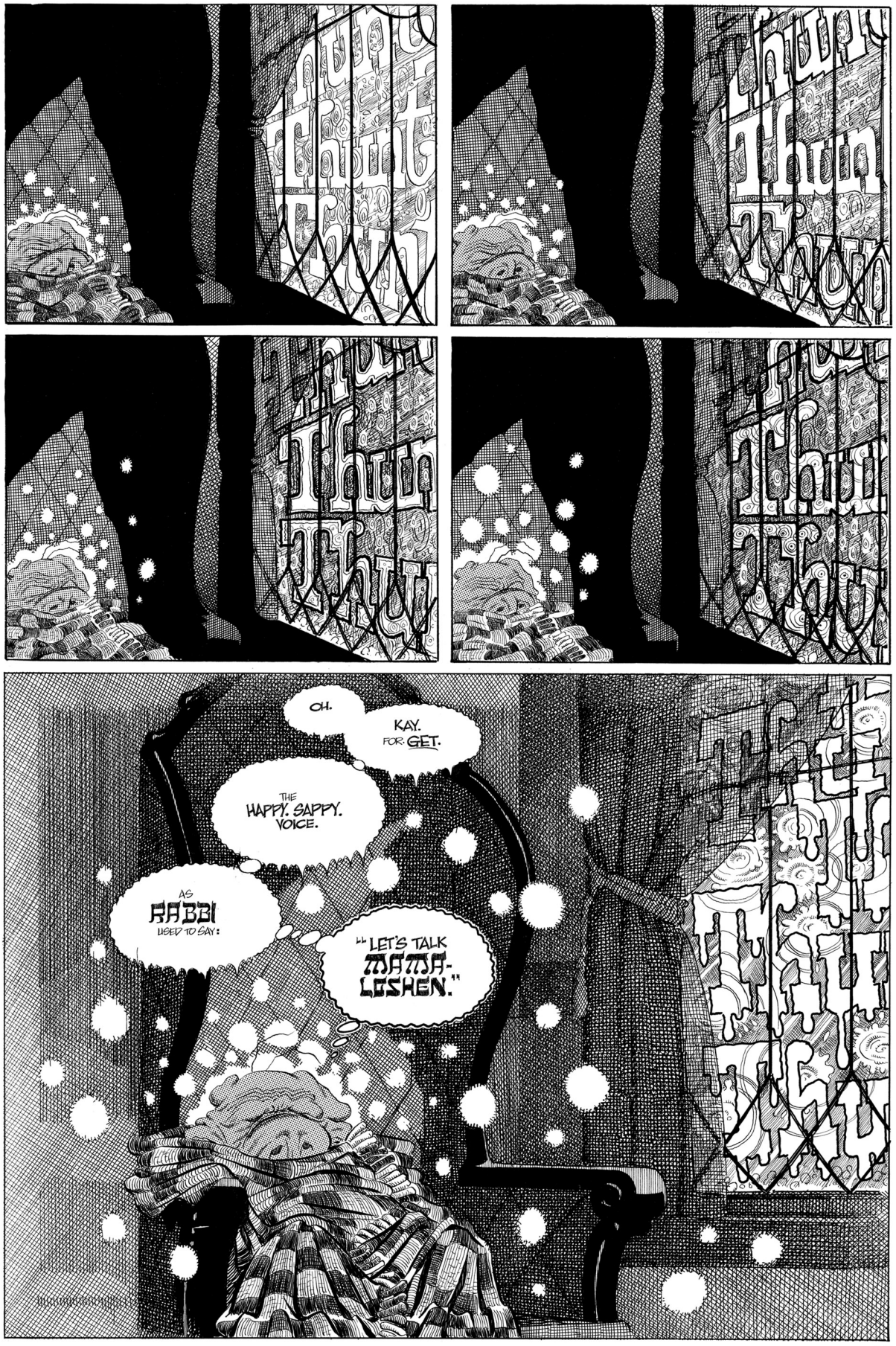

Thunt

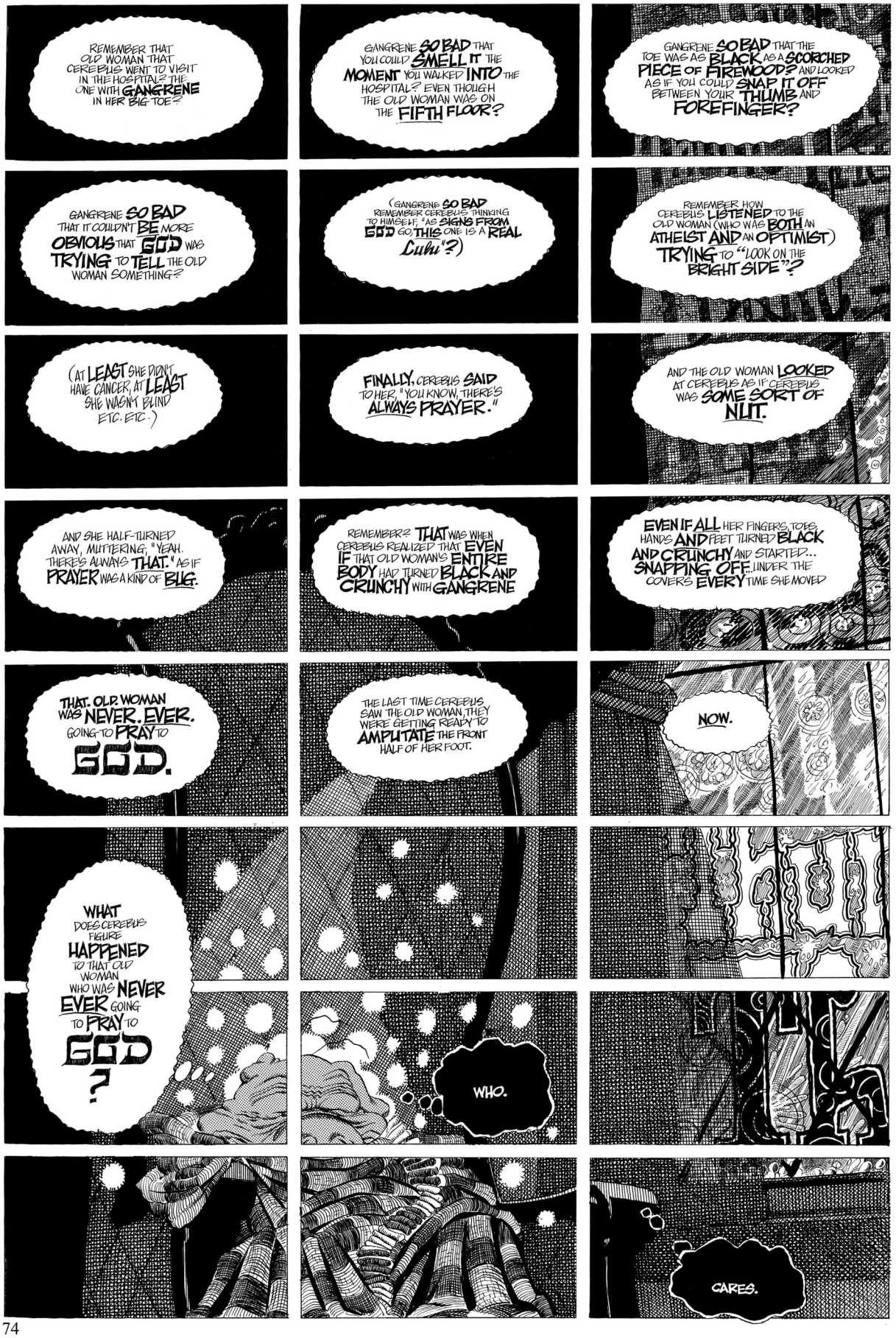

THUNT
SKTCH.
SKTCH.
Thunt
So.

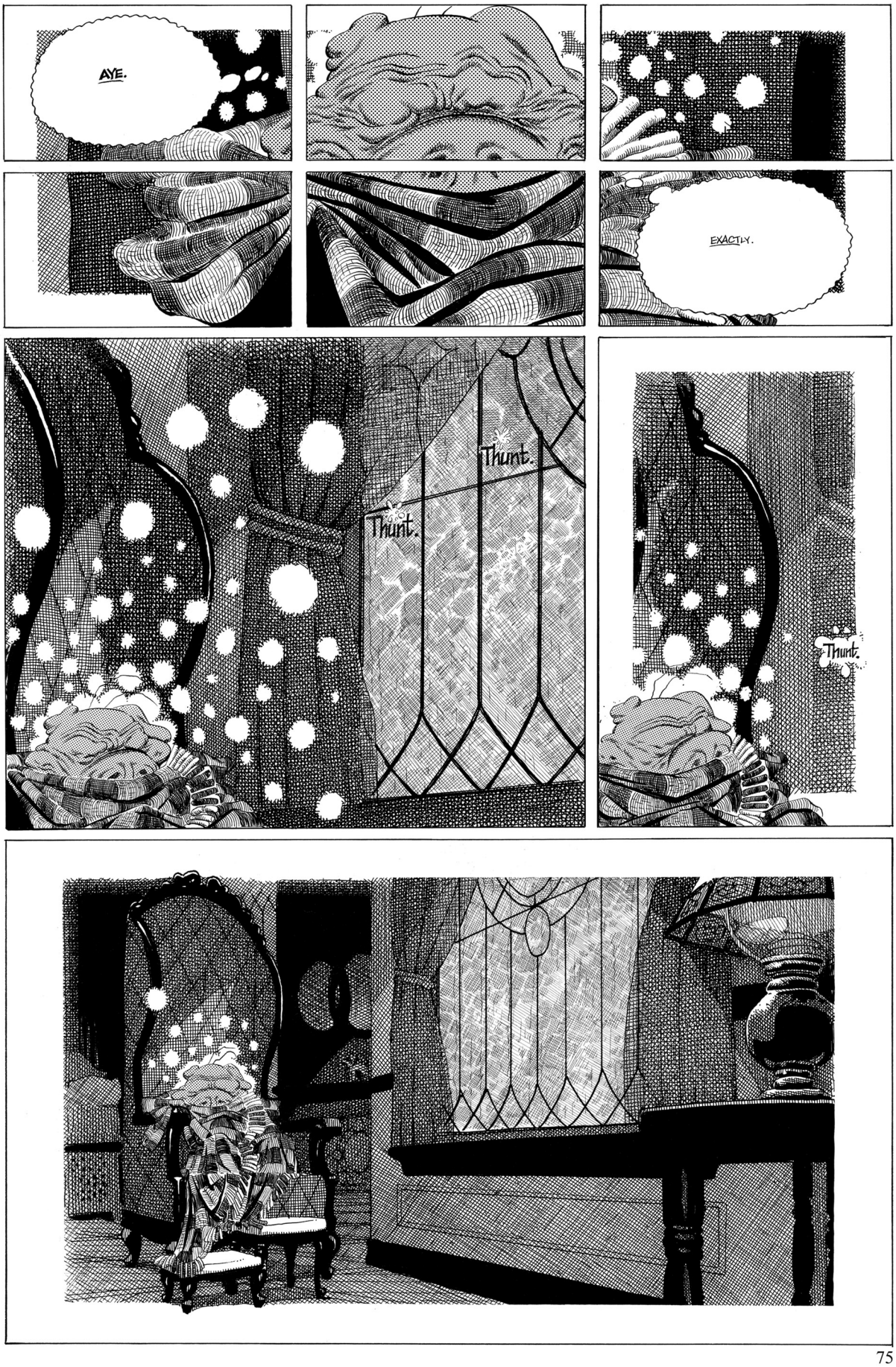

"SO"?
SO: WHAT DOES CEREBUS FIGURE.
HAPPENED.
WITH SHEP SHEP?
AYE.
Thunt
GUM
BIG FIGHT.
REALLY BIG FIGHT.
FOR HIM TO STAY AWAY TEN YEARS?
CEREBUS MUST HAVE
HIT HIM OR

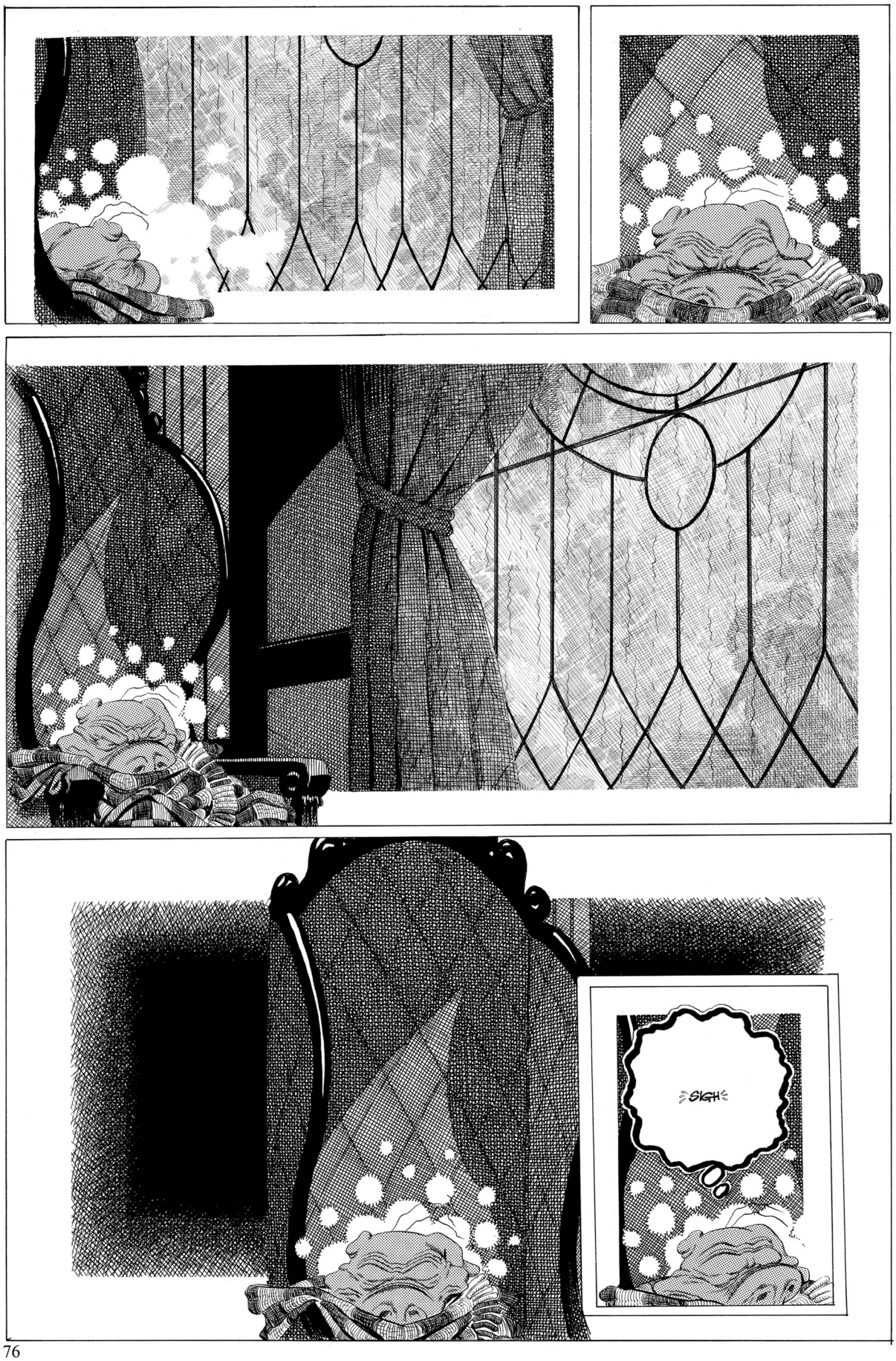

SO..... WHAT DOES CEREBUS THINK CEREBUS SHOULD ....DO.
PRAY. ♪
NAY.
CEREBUS MEANT:
WHAT DOES CEREBUS THINK CEREBUS SHOULD ....DO...
...ABOUT SHEP.SHEP?
SAME♪ ANSWER
IT'S LIKE CEREBUS ALWAYS USED TO TELL PEOPLE--" IT DOESN'T MATTER WHAT THE PROBLEM IS"
"THE ANSWER. STARTS WITH PRAYER."♪
AYE.
WELL.
CEREBUS DOESN'T FEEL LIKE PRAYING
(PSST THE ONLY THING WORSE THAN GETTING ANKY-CRAY WITH IM-HAY IS ULKING-SAY AT IM-HAY)
WELL--LIKE CEREBUS ALSO ALWAYS USED TO TELL PEOPLE--
"IT'S WHEN YOU DON'T FEEL LIKE PRAYING THAT PRAYER DOES THE MOST GOOD."♪

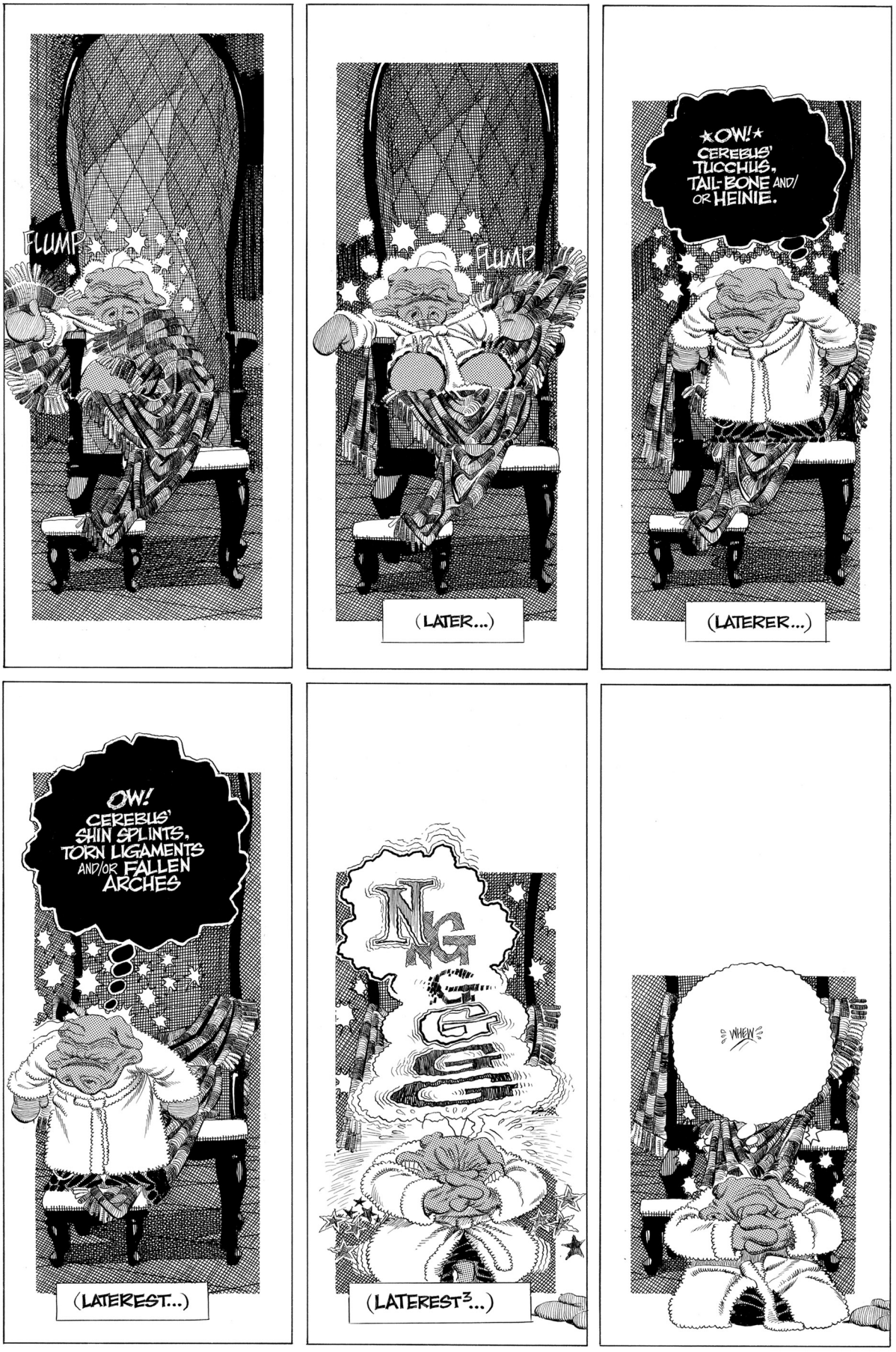

(PSST.)
WHAT.
IT'S LIKE CEREBUS ALWAYS USED TO TELL PEOPLE:
"IF THE HAPPY-SAPPY VOICE IN CEREBUS' HEAD DOESN'T SHUT UP..."
SKTCH! SKTCH
"...CEREBUS IS GOING TO JAM AN ICE PICK INTO HIS BRAIN..."
"...AND MAKE THE HAPPY-SAPPY VOICE IN HIS HEAD SHUT UP..."

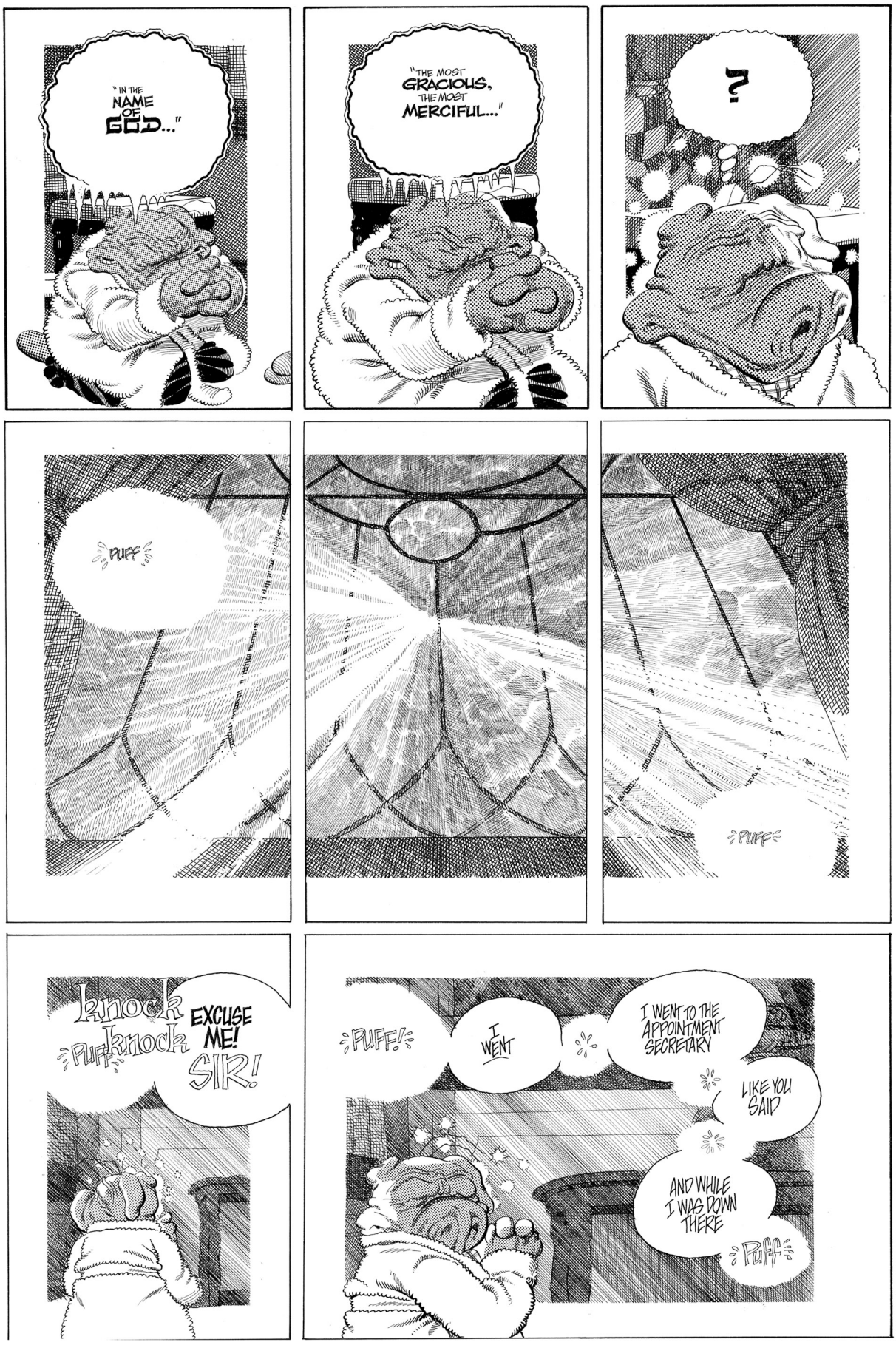

OH.
KAY.
FOR: GET.
THE
HAPPY. SAPPY.
VOICE.
AS
RABBI
USED TO SAY:
"LET'S TALK
MAMA-
LOSHEN."


REMEMBER THAT OLD WOMAN THAT CEREBUS WENT TO VISIT IN THE HOSPITAL? THE ONE WITH GANGRENE IN HER BIG TOE?
GANGRENE SO BAD THAT YOU COULD SMELL IT THE MOMENT YOU WALKED INTO THE HOSPITAL? EVEN THOUGH THE OLD WOMAN WAS ON THE FIFTH FLOOR?
GANGRENE SO BAD THAT THE TOE WAS AS BLACK AS A SCORCHED PIECE OF FIREWOOD? AND LOOKED AS IF YOU COULD SNAP IT OFF BETWEEN YOUR THUMB AND FOREFINGER?
GANGRENE SO BAD THAT IT COULDN'T BE MORE OBVIOUS THAT GOD WAS TRYING TO TELL THE OLD WOMAN SOMETHING?
(GANGRENE SO BAD REMEMBER CEREBUS THINKING TO HIMSELF, "AS SIGNS FROM GOD GO, THIS ONE IS A REAL Lulu"?)
REMEMBER HOW CEREBUS LISTENED TO THE OLD WOMAN (WHO WAS BOTH AN ATHEIST AND AN OPTIMIST) TRYING TO "LOOK ON THE BRIGHT SIDE"?
(AT LEAST SHE DIDN'T HAVE CANCER, AT LEAST SHE WASN'T BLIND ETC. ETC.)
FINALLY, CEREBUS SAID TO HER, "YOU KNOW, THERE'S ALWAYS PRAYER."
AND THE OLD WOMAN LOOKED AT CEREBUS AS IF CEREBUS WAS SOME SORT OF NUT.
AND SHE HALF-TURNED AWAY, MUTTERING, "YEAH. THERE'S ALWAYS THAT." AS IF PRAYER WAS A KIND OF BUG.
REMEMBER? THAT WAS WHEN CEREBUS REALIZED THAT EVEN IF THAT OLD WOMAN'S ENTIRE BODY HAD TURNED BLACK AND CRUNCHY WITH GANGRENE
EVEN IF ALL HER FINGERS, TOES, HANDS AND FEET TURNED BLACK AND CRUNCHY AND STARTED... SNAPPING OFF...UNDER THE COVERS EVERY TIME SHE MOVED
THAT. OLD WOMAN WAS NEVER. EVER. GOING TO PRAY TO GOD.
THE LAST TIME CEREBUS SAW THE OLD WOMAN, THEY WERE GETTING READY TO AMPUTATE THE FRONT HALF OF HER FOOT.
NOW.
WHAT DOES CEREBUS FIGURE HAPPENED TO THAT OLD WOMAN WHO WAS NEVER EVER GOING TO PRAY TO GOD?
WHO.
CARES.

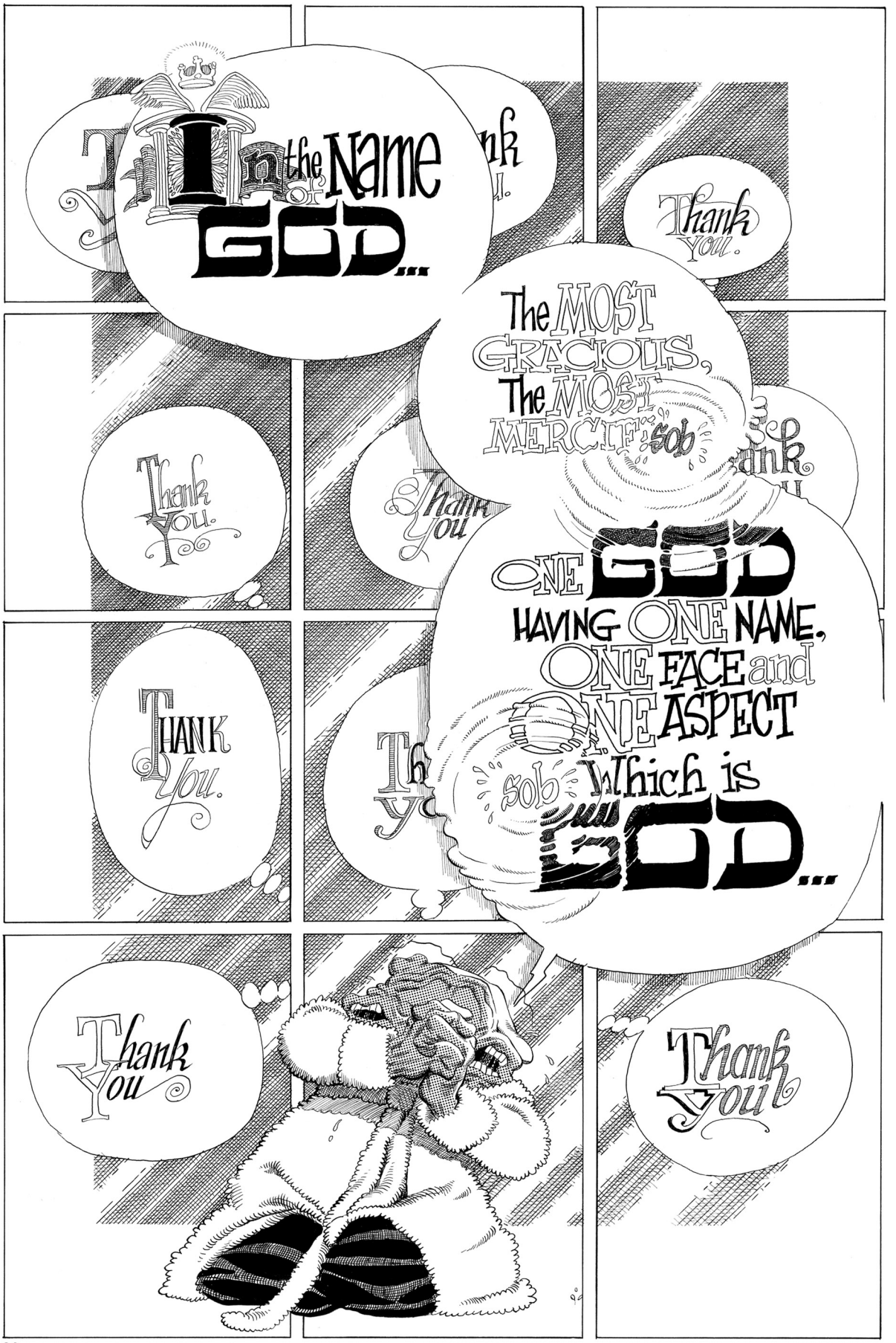

AYE.
EXACTLY.
Thunt.
Thunt.
Thunt.

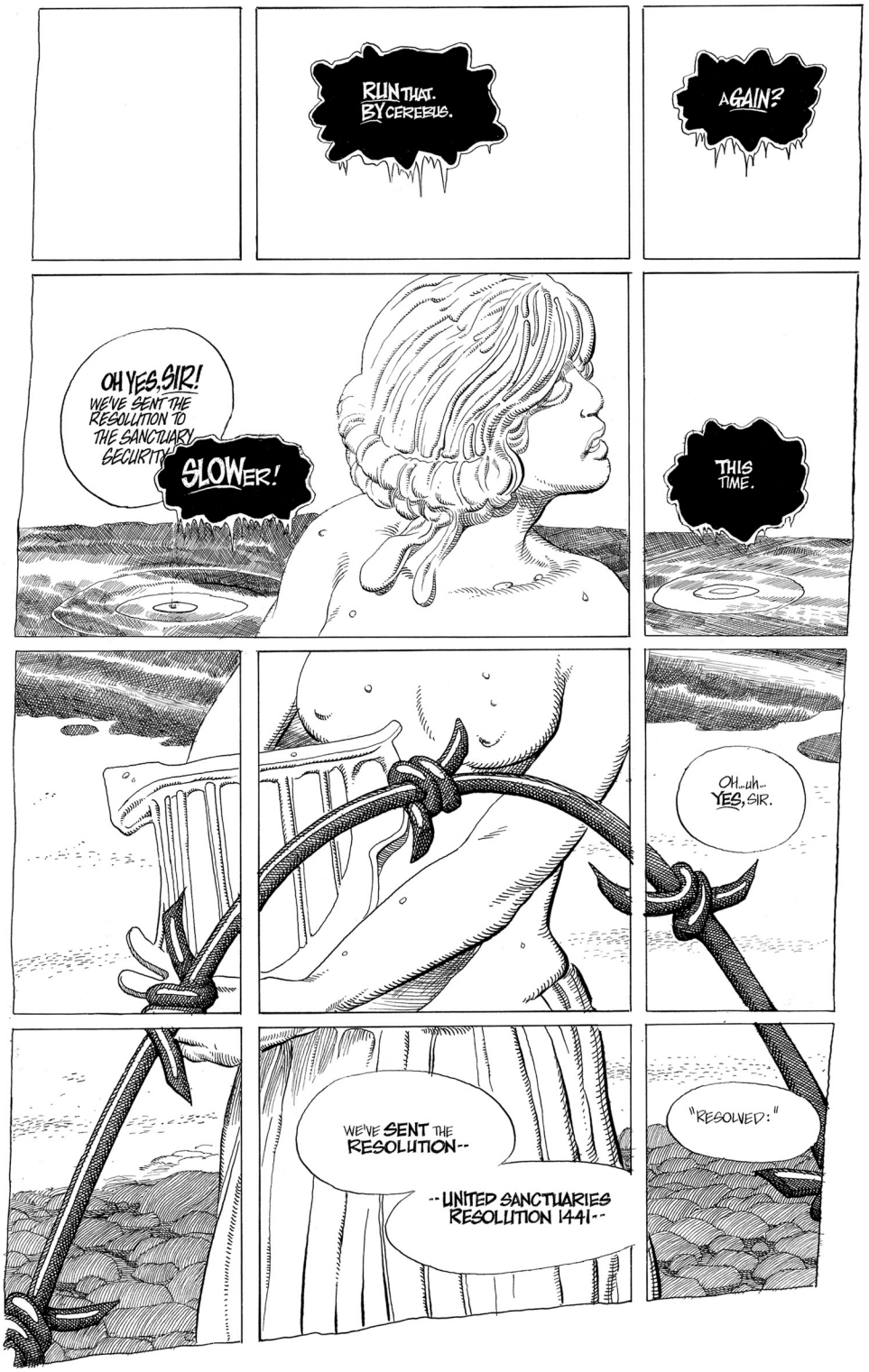

SIGH

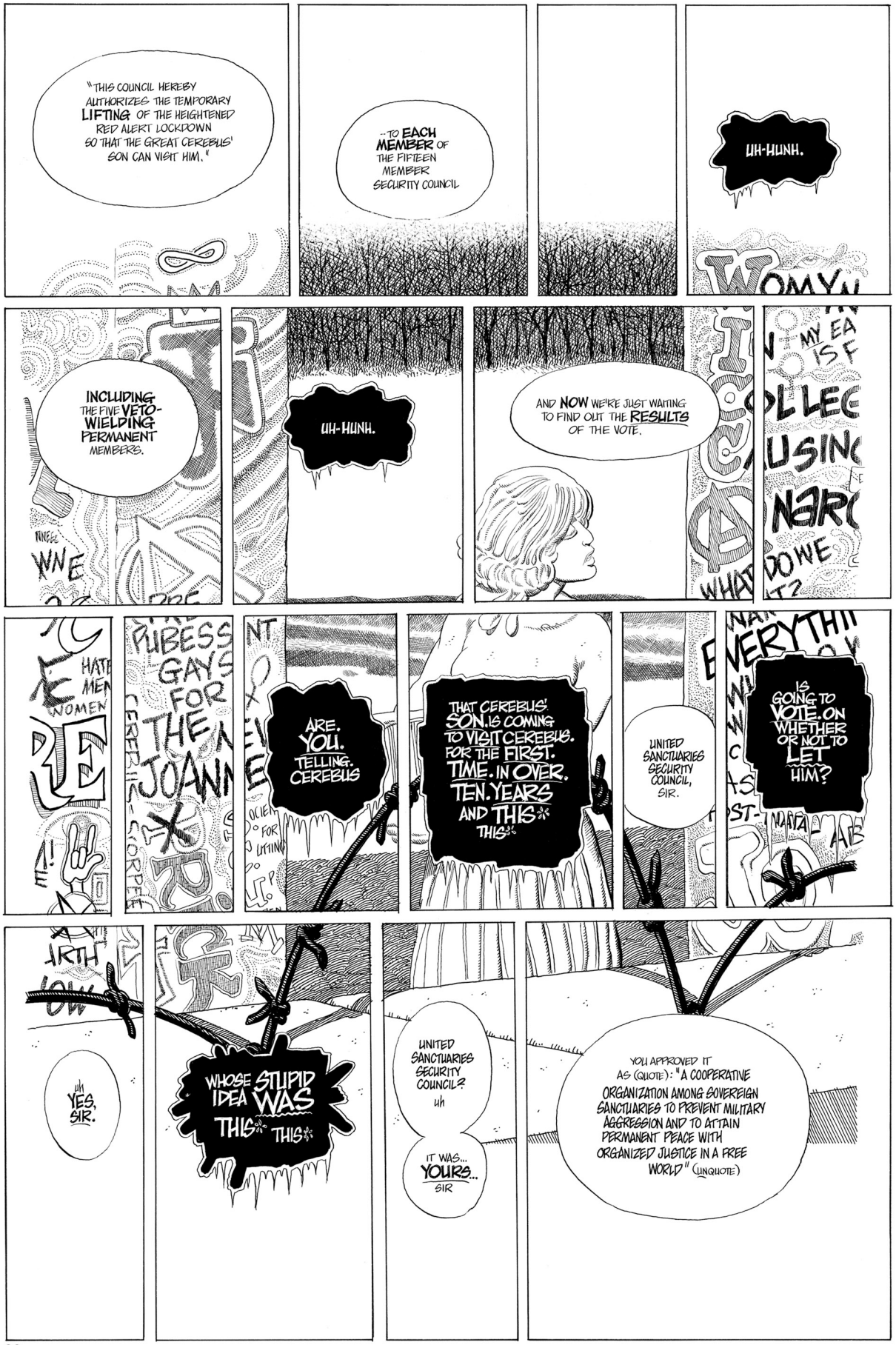

FLUMP
FLUMP
(LATER...)
★OW!★ CEREBUS' TUCCHUS, TAIL-BONE AND/OR HEINIE.
(LATERER...)
OW! CEREBUS' SHIN SPLINTS, TORN LIGAMENTS AND/OR FALLEN ARCHES
(LATEREST...)
NG
(LATEREST³...)
WHEW

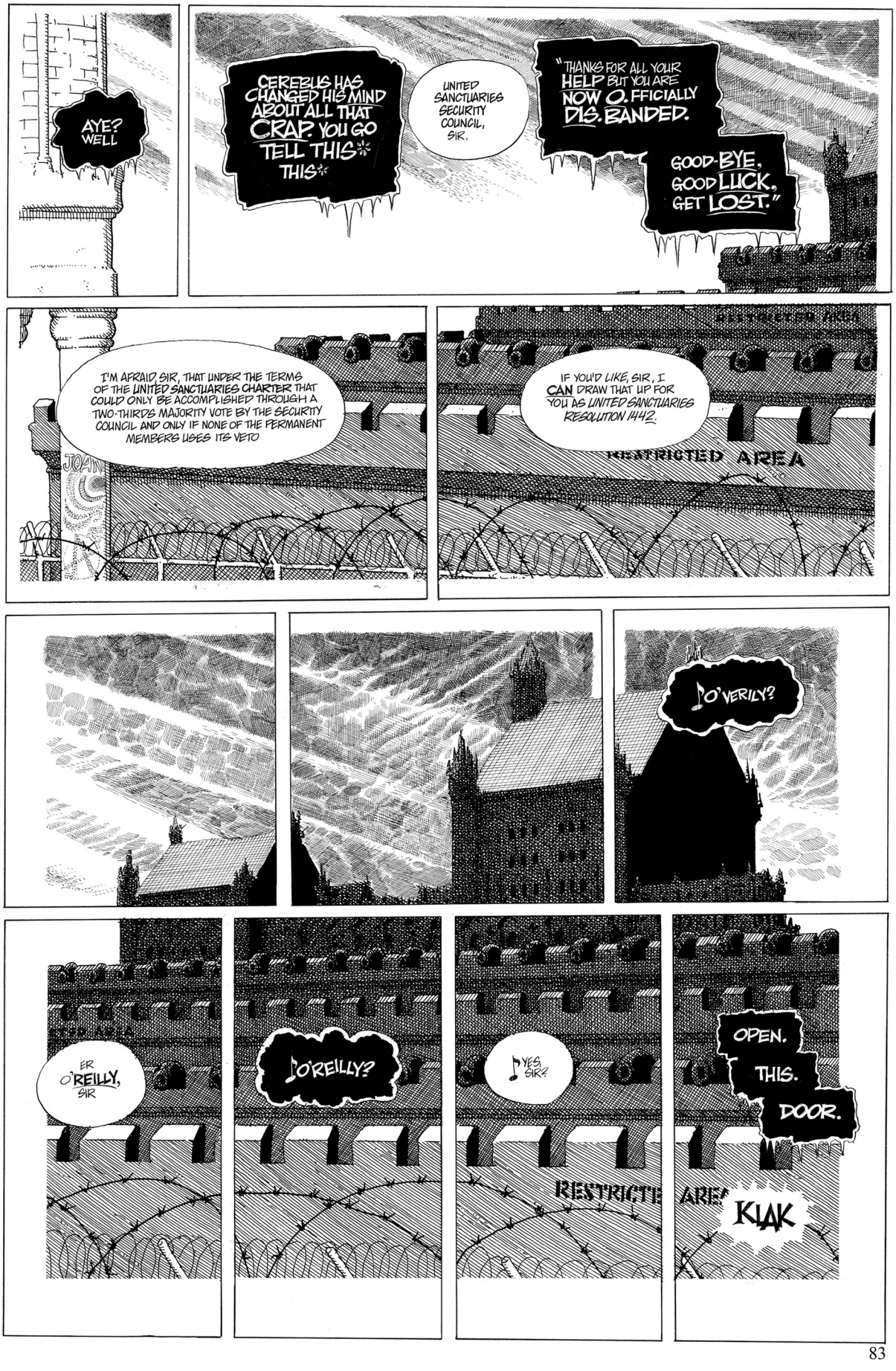

"IN THE NAME OF GOD..."
"THE MOST GRACIOUS, THE MOST MERCIFUL..."
?
PUFF
PUFF
knock knock
PUFF
EXCUSE ME! SIR!
PUFF!
I WENT
I WENT TO THE APPOINTMENT SECRETARY
LIKE YOU SAID
AND WHILE I WAS DOWN THERE
Puff

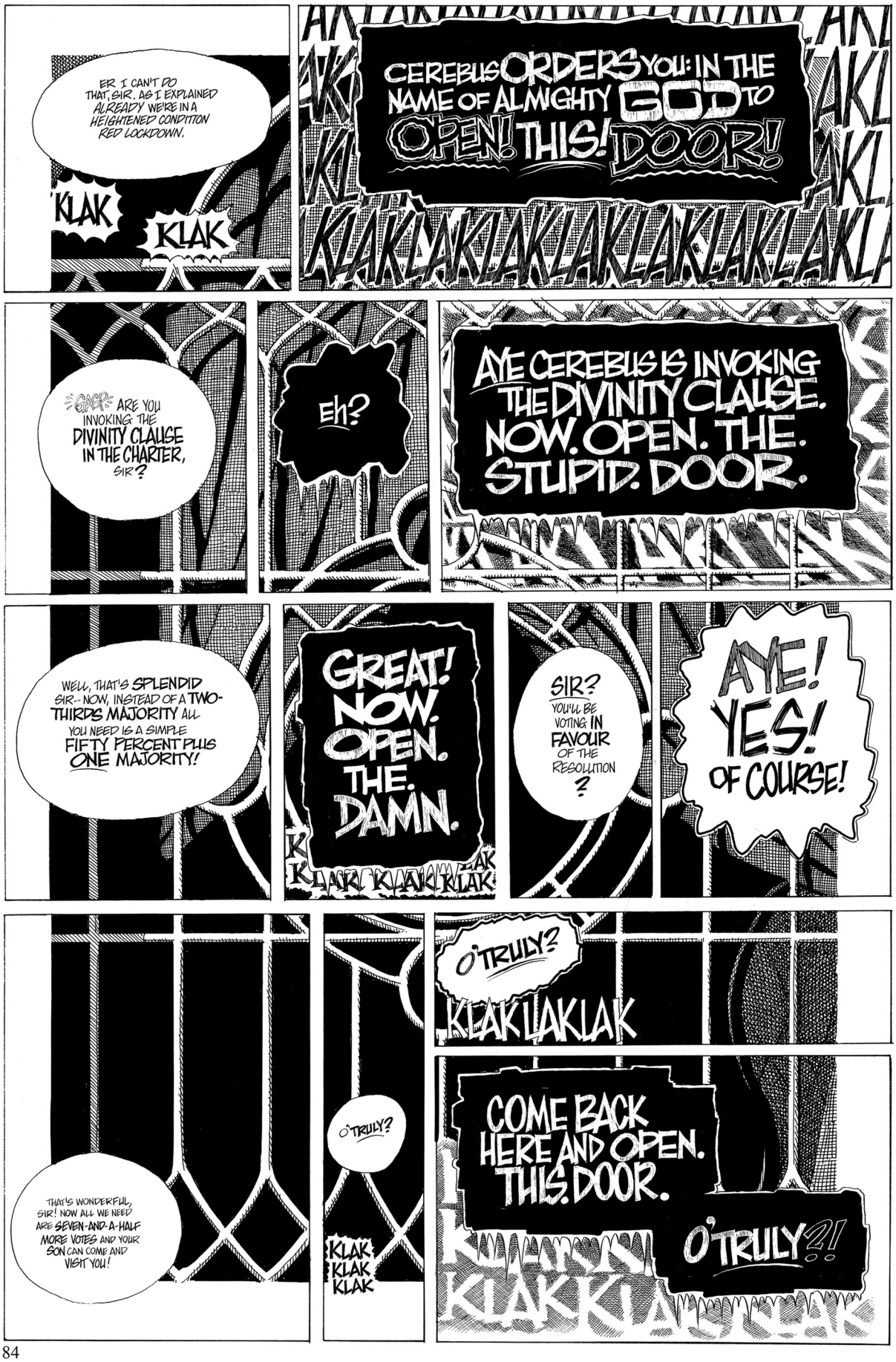
A COURIER CAME IN!
Puff
Puff
...IT'S UNBELIEVABLE, SIR...
WITH A MESSAGE FROM YOUR SON!
Puff
HE WANTS TO COME AND SEE YOU!
Puff
THIS AFTERNOON!
Puff
WE'RE ALL DOWNSTAIRS RIGHT NOW
Puff
IRONING OUT THE DETAILS!
Puff
BUT I
Puff
I HAD TO COME RIGHT
Puff
IT'S A MIRACLE, SIR!
Puff
A MIRACLE!
Puff
Puff
Puff
Puff


In the Name of GOD...
Thank You.
The MOST GRACIOUS, The MOST MERCIF-
sob
ONE GOD HAVING ONE NAME, ONE FACE and ONE ASPECT
sob
Which is GOD...
Thank You.
Thank You
Thank You
Thank You


RUN THAT. BY CERBERUS.
AGAIN?
OH YES, SIR! WE'VE SENT THE RESOLUTION TO THE SANCTUARY SECURITY
SLOWER!
THIS TIME.
OH...uh... YES, SIR.
WE'VE SENT THE RESOLUTION--
--UNITED SANCTUARIES RESOLUTION 1441--
"RESOLVED:"

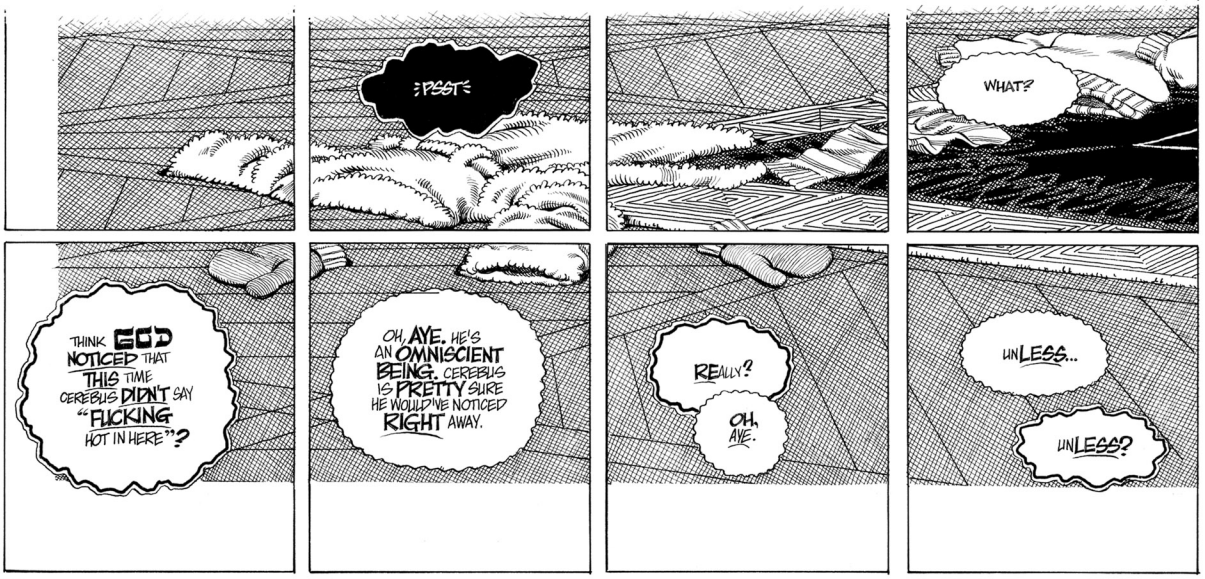

"THIS COUNCIL HEREBY AUTHORIZES THE TEMPORARY LIFTING OF THE HEIGHTENED RED ALERT LOCKDOWN SO THAT THE GREAT CEREBUS' SON CAN VISIT HIM."
--TO EACH MEMBER OF THE FIFTEEN MEMBER SECURITY COUNCIL
UH-HUNH.
INCLUDING THE FIVE VETO-WIELDING PERMANENT MEMBERS.
UH-HUNH.
AND NOW WE'RE JUST WAITING TO FIND OUT THE RESULTS OF THE VOTE.
ARE. YOU. TELLING. CEREBUS
THAT CEREBUS' SON IS COMING TO VISIT CEREBUS. FOR THE FIRST. TIME. IN OVER. TEN. YEARS AND THIS* THIS*
UNITED SANCTUARIES SECURITY COUNCIL, SIR.
IS GOING TO VOTE. ON WHETHER OR NOT TO LET HIM?
UH YES, SIR.
WHOSE STUPID IDEA WAS THIS* THIS*
UNITED SANCTUARIES SECURITY COUNCIL? UH
IT WAS... YOURS... SIR
YOU APPROVED IT AS (QUOTE): "A COOPERATIVE ORGANIZATION AMONG SOVEREIGN SANCTUARIES TO PREVENT MILITARY AGGRESSION AND TO ATTAIN PERMANENT PEACE WITH ORGANIZED JUSTICE IN A FREE WORLD" (UNQUOTE)

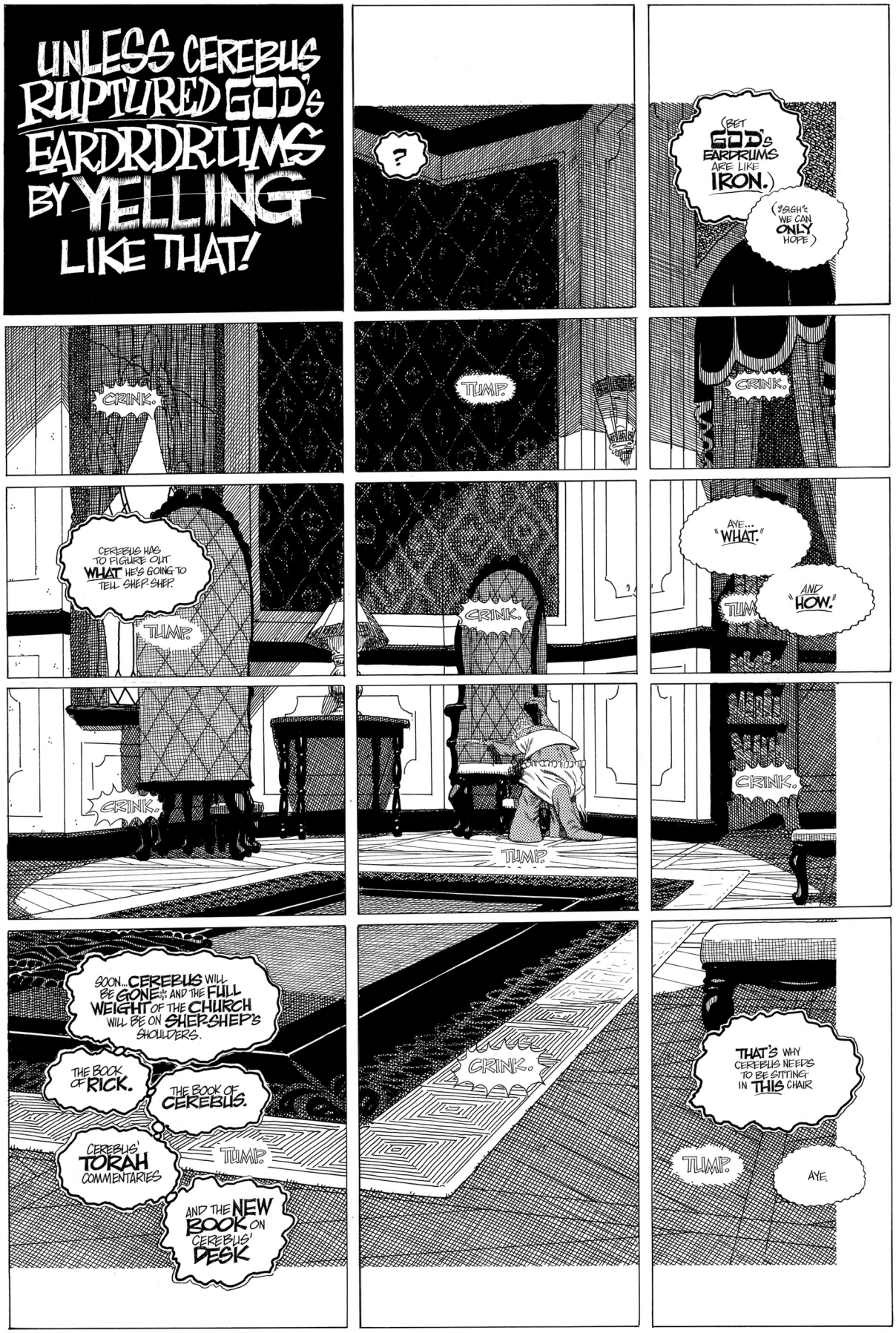

AYE? WELL
CEREBUS HAS CHANGED HIS MIND ABOUT ALL THAT CRAP. YOU GO TELL THIS* THIS*
UNITED SANCTUARIES SECURITY COUNCIL, SIR.
"THANKS FOR ALL YOUR HELP BUT YOU ARE NOW O.FFICIALLY DIS.BANDED.
GOOD-BYE, GOOD LUCK, GET LOST."
I'M AFRAID SIR, THAT UNDER THE TERMS OF THE UNITED SANCTUARIES CHARTER THAT COULD ONLY BE ACCOMPLISHED THROUGH A TWO-THIRDS MAJORITY VOTE BY THE SECURITY COUNCIL AND ONLY IF NONE OF THE PERMANENT MEMBERS USES ITS VETO
IF YOU'D LIKE, SIR, I CAN DRAW THAT UP FOR YOU AS UNITED SANCTUARIES RESOLUTION 1442.
RESTRICTED AREA
♪O'VERILY?
ER O'REILLY, SIR
♪O'REILLY?
♪YES SIR?
OPEN. THIS. DOOR.
KLAK

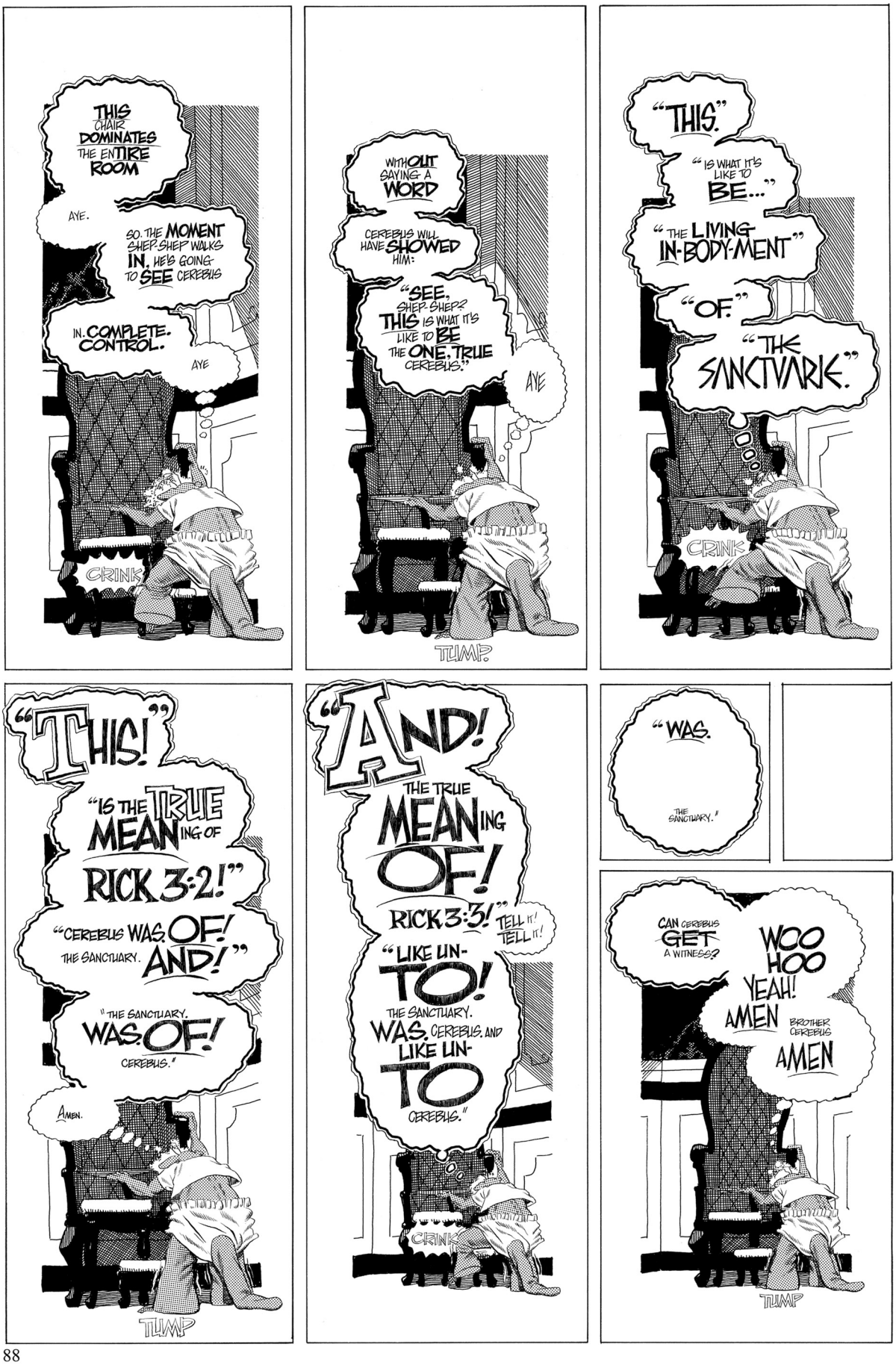

ER I CAN'T DO THAT, SIR. AS I EXPLAINED ALREADY WE'RE IN A HEIGHTENED CONDITION RED LOCKDOWN.
KLAK
KLAK
CEREBUS ORDERS YOU: IN THE NAME OF ALMIGHTY GOD TO OPEN! THIS! DOOR!
KLAKLAKLAKLAKLAKLAKLAKLAKLA
AHEM ARE YOU INVOKING THE DIVINITY CLAUSE IN THE CHARTER, SIR?
EH?
AYE CEREBUS IS INVOKING THE DIVINITY CLAUSE. NOW. OPEN. THE. STUPID. DOOR.
WELL, THAT'S SPLENDID SIR-- NOW, INSTEAD OF A TWO-THIRDS MAJORITY ALL YOU NEED IS A SIMPLE FIFTY PERCENT PLUS ONE MAJORITY!
GREAT! NOW. OPEN. THE. DAMN.
KLAK KLAK KLAK
SIR? YOU'LL BE VOTING IN FAVOUR OF THE RESOLUTION?
AYE! YES! OF COURSE!
THAT'S WONDERFUL, SIR! NOW ALL WE NEED ARE SEVEN-AND-A-HALF MORE VOTES AND YOUR SON CAN COME AND VISIT YOU!
O'TRULY?
KLAK KLAK KLAK
O'TRULY?
KLAKLAKLAK
COME BACK HERE AND OPEN. THIS. DOOR.
O'TRULY?!
KLAKKLAKLAK

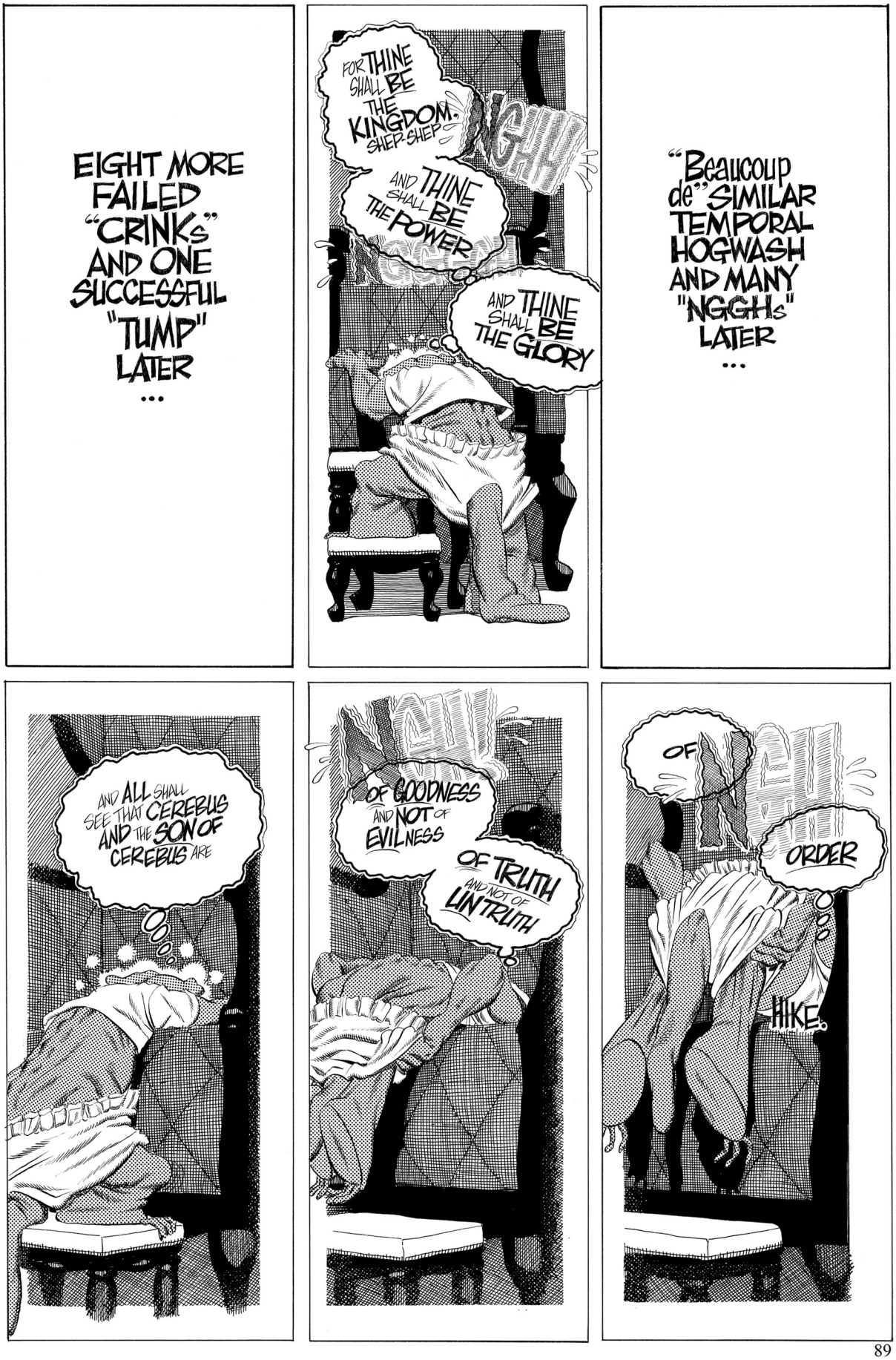
THIS IS AWFUL
(HOW DID CEREBUS LET IT COME TO THIS?)
(SANCTUARY SENILITY COUNCIL... FEH.)
THEY HAVE TO LET SHEP-SHEP IN
THE FATE OF THE ENTIRE CHURCH HINGES ON WHAT CEREBUS HAS TO TELL HIM.
PANT
MIND YOU, (CEREBUS CAN'T REMEMBER WHAT IT IS CEREBUS HAS TO TELL HIM, BUT...)
(HANG ON. THAT'S A BIGGER PROBLEM THAN CEREBUS IS MAKING IT SOUND LIKE IT IS.)
(WHAT IS?)
(CEREBUS NOT REMEMBERING WHAT IT IS HE HAS TO TELL SHEP-SHEP.)
(MM. GOOD POINT.)
(AYE.)
PANT
BIG PROBLEM.
HUGE. HUGE.
PROBLEM.
WELL, NOW. LET CEREBUS THINK ABOUT THAT
WHAT CEREBUS HAS TO TELL SHEP-SHEP IS:
(BYYY GUM)
PANT
"SHEP-SHEP? YOUR FATHER HAS TO TELL YOU: "
"WHAT YOUR FATHER HAS TO TELL YOU..."
"...SHEP-SHEP."
"IS..."
"...A VERY... DEEP, DARK SECRET... SO YOU MUST LISTEN CLOSELY..."
"TO"
"TO"
OH! THE BOOK!
AYE. HEH-HEH THE BOOK.
(WHEW. THAT WAS A CLOSE ONE!)
"The BOOK, SHEP-SHEP..."
"AND IT'S RIGHT OVER THERE ON PAPA'S DESK."
NOW THAT'S SETTLED THAT LEAVES ONLY ONE UNANSWERED QUESTION:

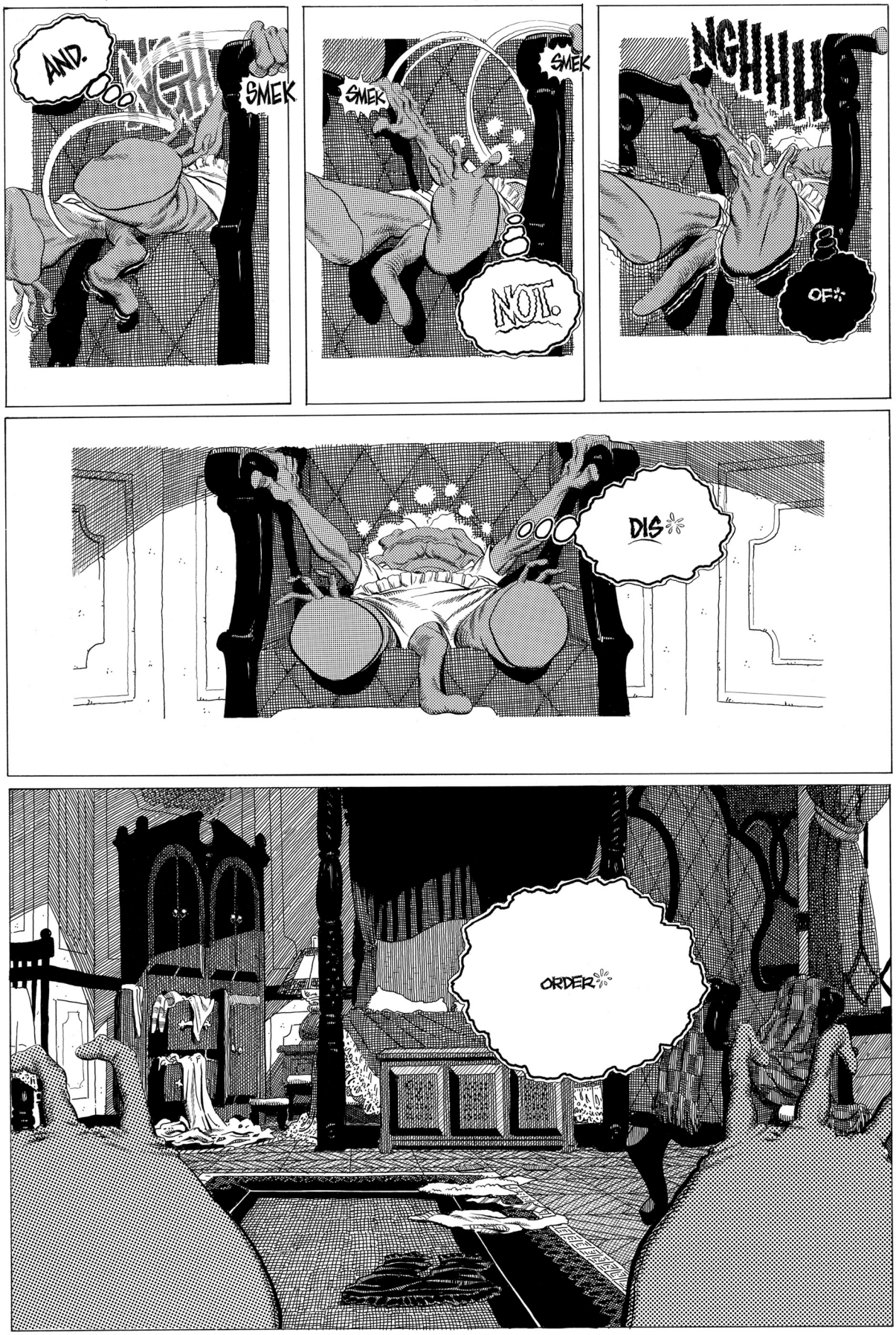
Why.
is it.
ALWAYS.
so.
in
HERE


=PSST=
WHAT?
THINK GOD NOTICED THAT THIS TIME CEREBUS DIDN'T SAY "FUCKING HOT IN HERE"?
OH, AYE. HE'S AN OMNISCIENT BEING. CEREBUS IS PRETTY SURE HE WOULD'VE NOTICED RIGHT AWAY.
REALLY?
OH, AYE.
UNLESS...
UNLESS?

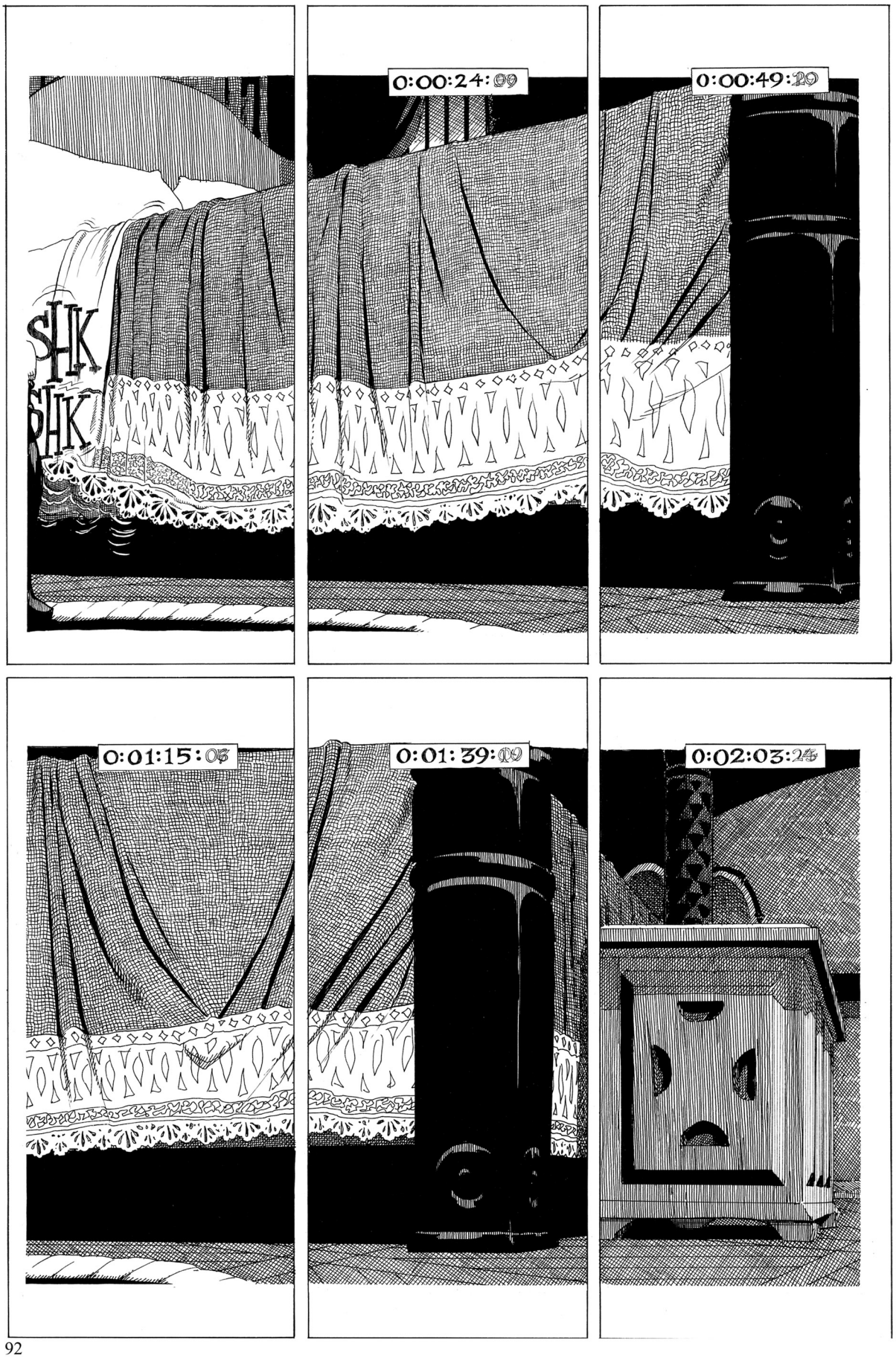

UNLESS CEREBUS RUPTURED GOD'S EARDRDRUMS BY YELLING LIKE THAT!
?
(BET GOD'S EARDRUMS ARE LIKE IRON.)
(SIGH: WE CAN ONLY HOPE)
CRINK.
TUMP.
CRINK.
CEREBUS HAS TO FIGURE OUT WHAT HE'S GOING TO TELL SHEP-SHEP.
TUMP.
CRINK.
AYE... "WHAT."
AND "HOW."
TUM
CRINK.
CRINK.
TUMP.
SOON... CEREBUS WILL BE GONE... AND THE FULL WEIGHT OF THE CHURCH WILL BE ON SHEP-SHEP'S SHOULDERS.
THE BOOK OF RICK.
THE BOOK OF CEREBUS.
CEREBUS' TORAH COMMENTARIES
TUMP.
AND THE NEW BOOK ON CEREBUS' DESK
CRINK.
THAT'S WHY CEREBUS NEEDS TO BE SITTING IN THIS CHAIR
TUMP.
AYE.

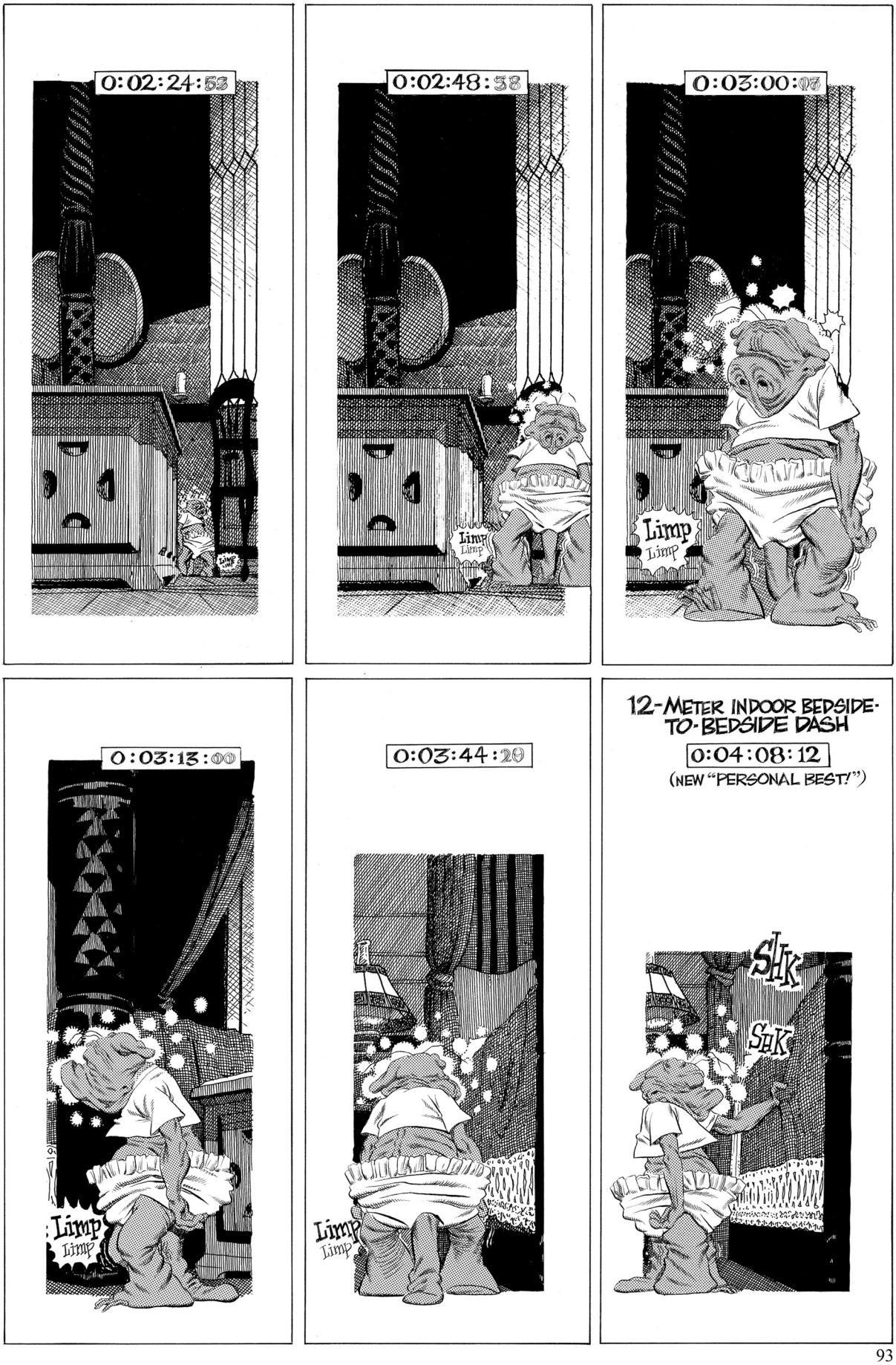

THIS CHAIR DOMINATES THE ENTIRE ROOM
AYE.
SO. THE MOMENT SHEP SHEP WALKS IN, HE'S GOING TO SEE CEREBUS
IN COMPLETE CONTROL.
AYE
CRINK
WITHOUT SAYING A WORD
CEREBUS WILL HAVE SHOWED HIM:
"SEE, SHEP. SHEP? THIS IS WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE THE ONE, TRUE CEREBUS."
AYE
TUMP
"THIS."
"IS WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE..."
"THE LIVING IN-BODY-MENT"
"OF."
"THE SANCTUARY."
CRINK
"THIS!"
"IS THE TRUE MEANING OF RICK 3:2!"
"CEREBUS WAS OF! THE SANCTUARY. AND!"
"THE SANCTUARY. WAS OF! CEREBUS."
AMEN.
TUMP
"AND!
THE TRUE MEANING OF!
RICK 3:3!"
TELL IT! TELL IT!
"LIKE UN-TO!
THE SANCTUARY. WAS, CEREBUS, AND LIKE UN-TO
CEREBUS."
CRINK
"WAS.
THE SANCTUARY."
CAN CEREBUS GET A WITNESS?
WOO HOO
YEAH!
AMEN
BROTHER CEREBUS
AMEN
TUMP

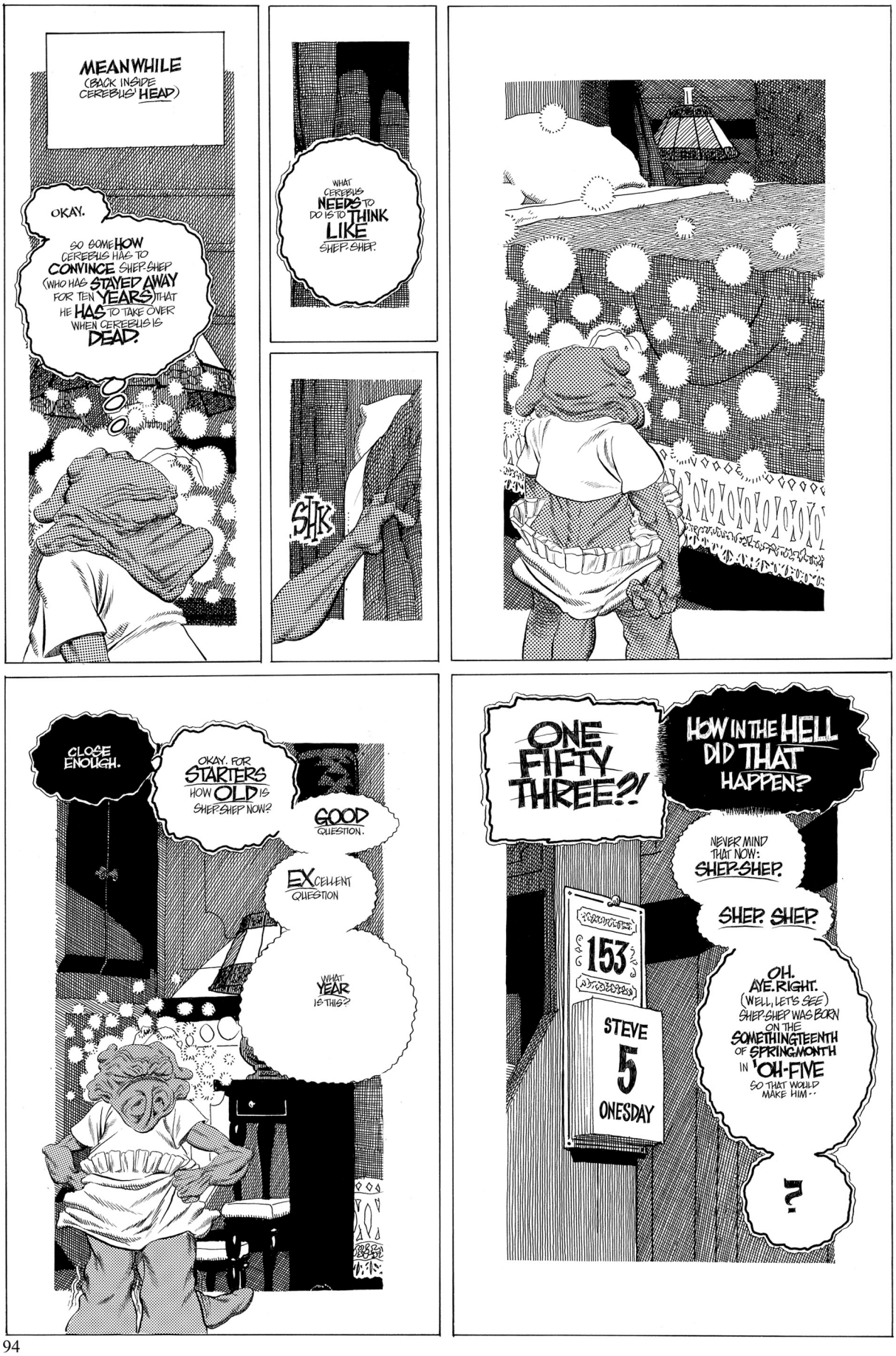

EIGHT MORE FAILED "CRINKS" AND ONE SUCCESSFUL "TUMP" LATER ...
FOR THINE SHALL BE THE KINGDOM. SHER-SHEP
AND THINE SHALL BE THE POWER
AND THINE SHALL BE THE GLORY
"Beaucoup de" SIMILAR TEMPORAL HOGWASH AND MANY "NGGHs" LATER ...
AND ALL SHALL SEE THAT CEREBUS AND THE SON OF CEREBUS ARE
OF GOODNESS AND NOT OF EVILNESS
OF TRUTH AND NOT OF UNTRUTH
OF
ORDER
HIKE.

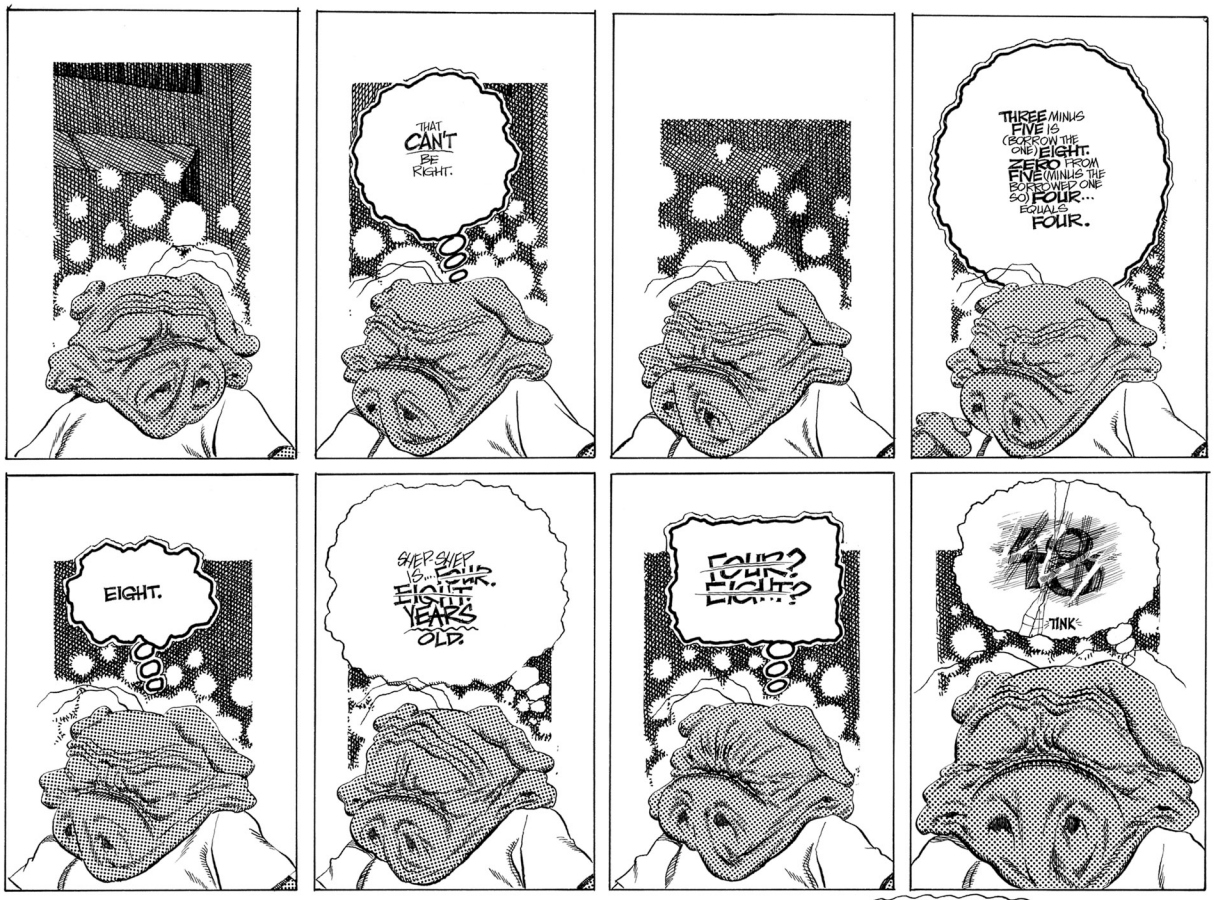

AND.
SMEK
SMEK
SMEK
NOT.
NGHHH
OF
DIS
ORDER

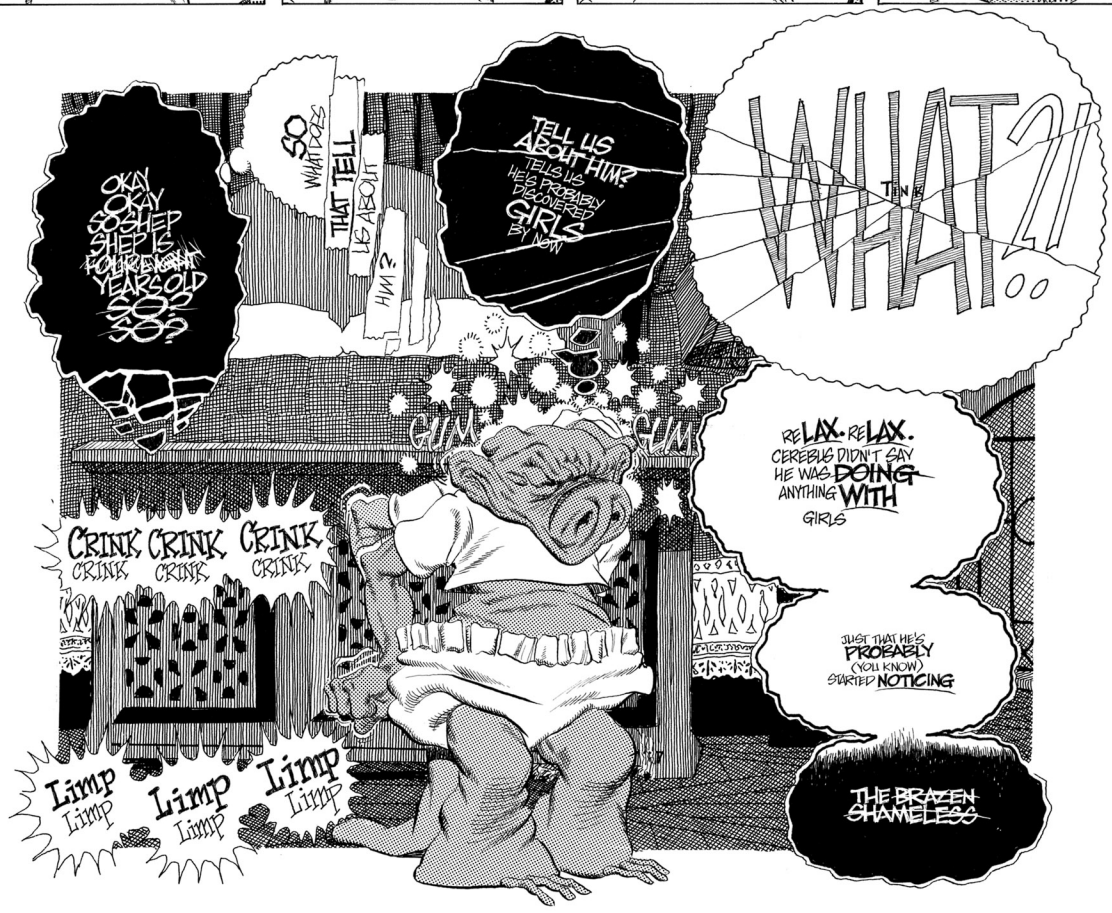
AWwwwwww
CRAP.
FLUMP
FLUMP
HOUSE KEEP-ING
GUM
GUM
(PSST)
WHAT.
(WE'RE IN THE MIDDLE OF A HIGH-END RED ALERT LOCKDOWN)
(IF THEY WON'T UNLOCK THE DOOR FOR CEREBUS WHAT MAKES CEREBUS THINK THEY'LL UNLOCK THE DOOR FOR)
HOUSE
WELL-- ~~DOUBLE~~ CRAP.

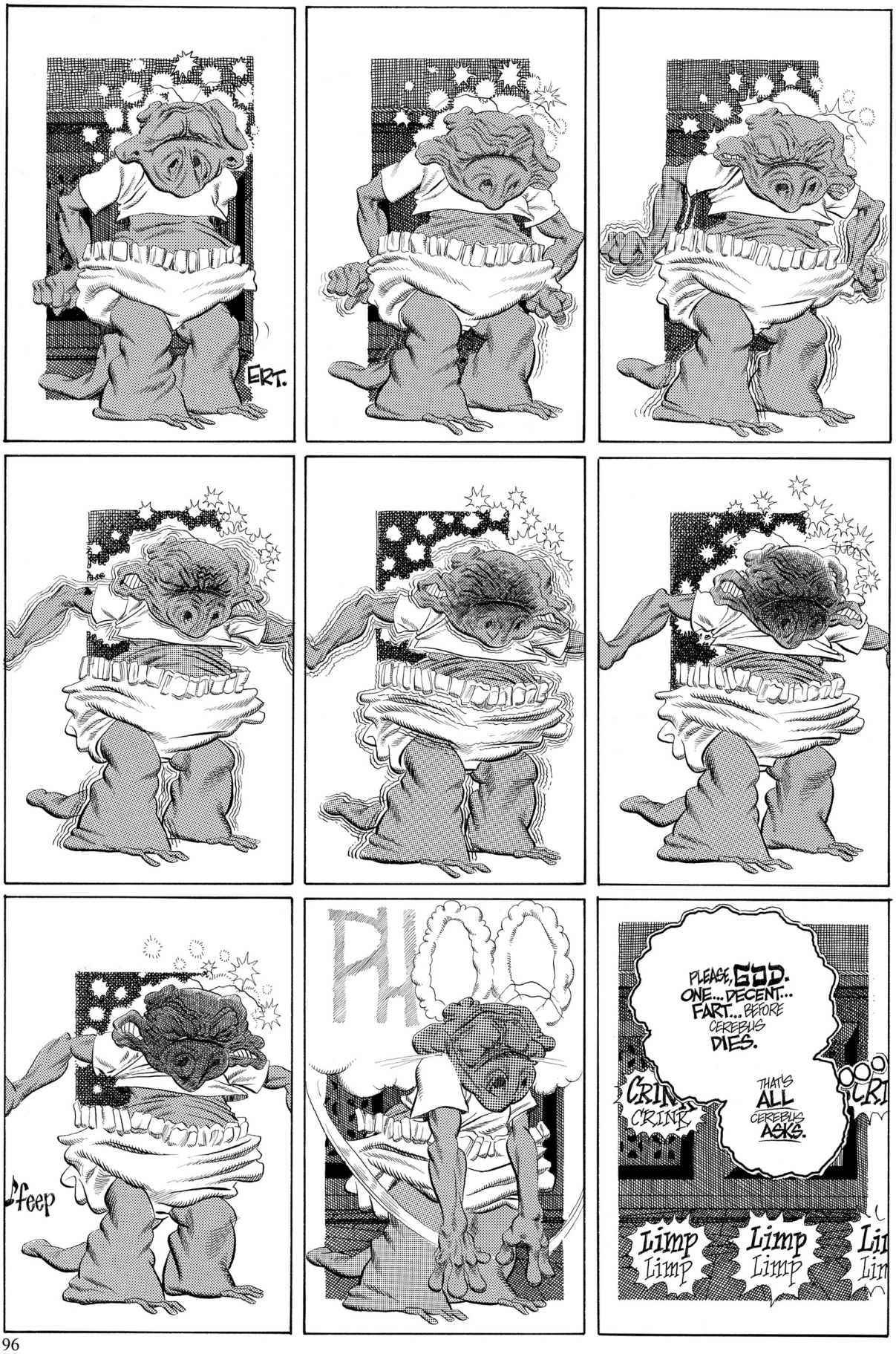

SHK
SHK
0:00:24:09
0:00:49:19
0:01:15:06
0:01:39:09
0:02:03:24


0:02:24:53
0:02:48:38
Limp
Limp
0:03:00:03
Limp
Limp
0:03:13:00
Limp
Limp
0:03:44:20
Limp
Limp
12-METER INDOOR BEDSIDE-TO-BEDSIDE DASH
0:04:08:12
(NEW "PERSONAL BEST!")
SHK
SHK

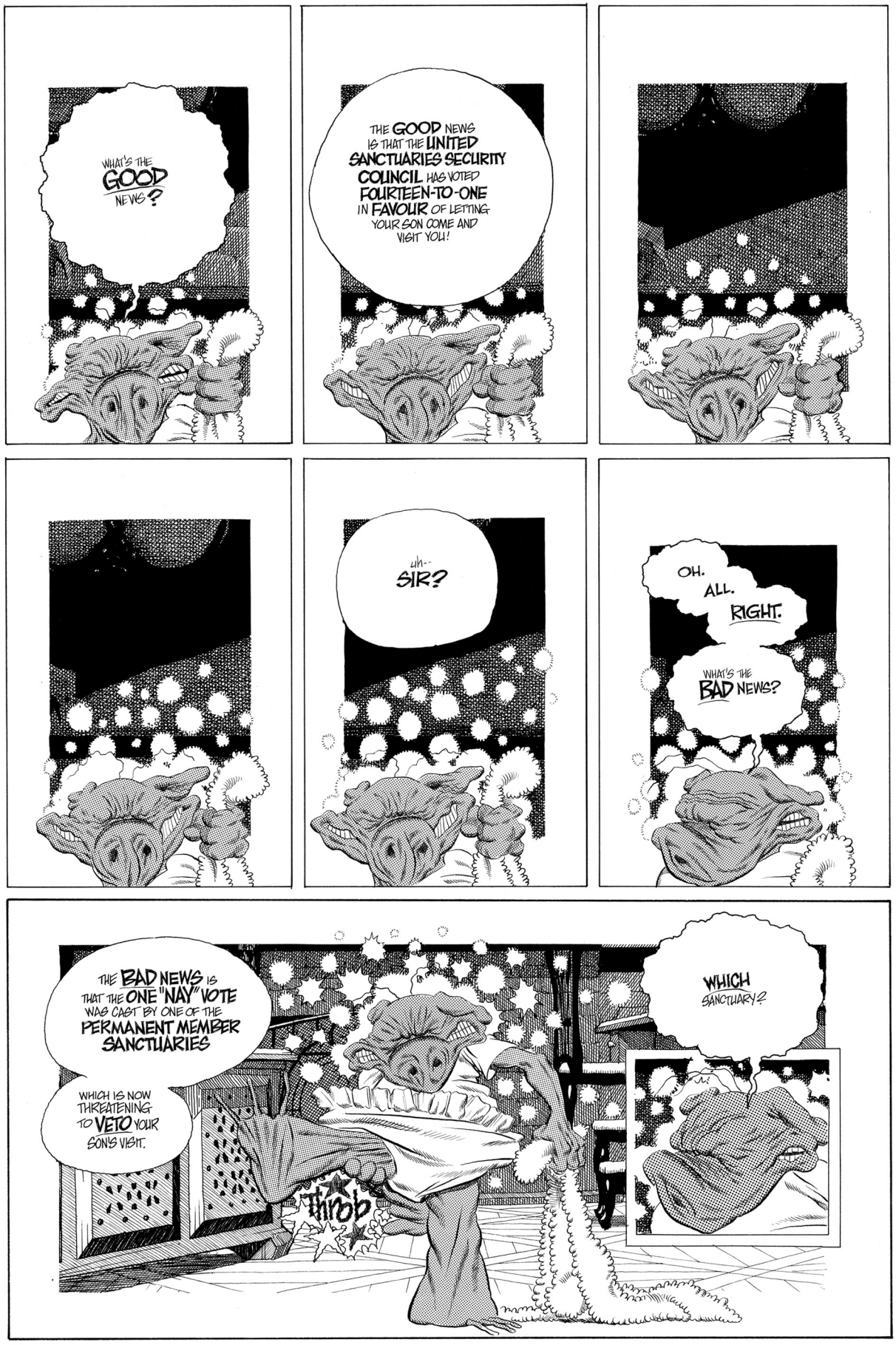

MEANWHILE
(BACK INSIDE CEREBUS' HEAD)
OKAY.
SO SOMEHOW CEREBUS HAS TO CONVINCE SHEP-SHEP (WHO HAS STAYED AWAY FOR TEN YEARS) THAT HE HAS TO TAKE OVER WHEN CEREBUS IS DEAD.
WHAT CEREBUS NEEDS TO DO IS TO THINK LIKE SHEP-SHEP.
SHK
CLOSE ENOUGH.
OKAY. FOR STARTERS HOW OLD IS SHEP-SHEP NOW?
GOOD QUESTION.
EXCELLENT QUESTION
WHAT YEAR IS THIS?
ONE FIFTY THREE?!
HOW IN THE HELL DID THAT HAPPEN?
NEVER MIND THAT NOW: SHEP-SHEP.
SHEP-SHEP
153
STEVE
5
ONESDAY
OH. AYE. RIGHT. (WELL, LET'S SEE) SHEP-SHEP WAS BORN ON THE SOMETHINGTEENTH OF SPRINGMONTH IN 'OH-FIVE
SO THAT WOULD MAKE HIM··
?


THAT CAN'T BE RIGHT.
THREE MINUS FIVE IS (BORROW THE ONE) EIGHT. ZERO FROM FIVE (MINUS THE BORROWED ONE SO) FOUR... EQUALS FOUR.
EIGHT.
SHEP SHEP IS... FOUR. EIGHT. EIGHT YEARS OLD.
FOUR? EIGHT? EIGH...?
TINK

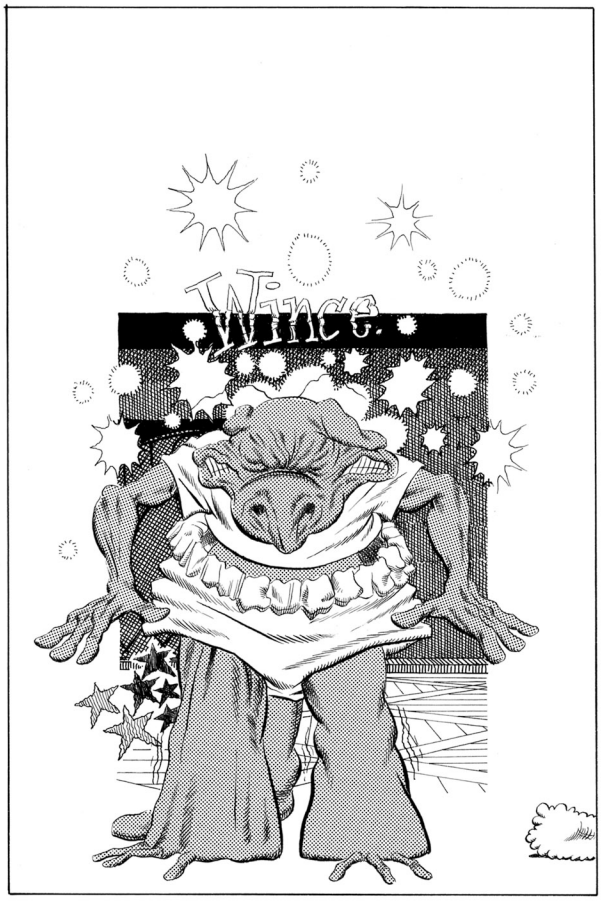

OKAY OKAY SO SHEP SHEP IS FOUR EIGHT YEARS OLD SO SO?
SO WHAT DOES THAT TELL US ABOUT HIM?
TELL US ABOUT HIM? TELLS US HE'S PROBABLY DISCOVERED GIRLS BY NOW
WHAT?!
TINK
GIM
GIM
CRINK CRINK CRINK CRINK CRINK CRINK
Limp Limp Limp Limp Limp Limp
RELAX. RELAX. CEREBUS DIDN'T SAY HE WAS DOING ANYTHING WITH GIRLS
JUST THAT HE'S PROBABLY (YOU KNOW) STARTED NOTICING
THE BRAZEN SHAMELESS


ERT.
feep
PH
PLEASE, GOD. ONE... DECENT... FART... BEFORE CEREBUS DIES.
THAT'S ALL CEREBUS ASKS.
CRIN CRINK
Limp Limp
Limp Limp

CEREBUS IS BEING UNFAIR.
UNFAIR? HOW IS CEREBUS BEING UNFAIR?
IF CEREBUS IS GOING TO STUFF HIMSELF WITH CHEESE EVERY DAY --
(OW! CEREBUS' BACK)
(BEND YOUR KNEES)
(OW! CEREBUS' KNEES)
--TO MAKE HIMSELF CONSTERNATED SO THAT CEREBUS DOESN'T HAVE TO CALL FOR "IF-YOU-SO-MUCH-AS-BREATHE-A-WORD-TO-ANYONE-THAT-CEREBUS-HAS-TO-WEAR-ONE-OF-THESE-YOU-ARE-ONE-DEAD" WISE FELLOW--
THEN IT'S HARDLY FAIR TO BLAME
SIR?
O'VERILY?! WITH NEWS OF SHEP-SHEP?!?
CEREBUS LEAPS...
HOWRI
...TO HIS FOOT.
OW! EVERY MUSCLE AND TENDON IN CEREBUS' BODY BETWEEN THE BASE OF HIS NECK AND HIS (NOW) RE-AGGRAVATED CHARLEYHORSE
OW.
OW. OW.
AYE?♪
I HAVE SOME GOOD NEWS, SIR!
AND..UH... I HAVE SOME... BAD..NEWS


WHAT'S THE GOOD NEWS?
THE GOOD NEWS IS THAT THE UNITED SANCTUARIES SECURITY COUNCIL HAS VOTED FOURTEEN-TO-ONE IN FAVOUR OF LETTING YOUR SON COME AND VISIT YOU!
uh--
SIR?
OH. ALL. RIGHT.
WHAT'S THE BAD NEWS?
THE BAD NEWS IS THAT THE ONE "NAY" VOTE WAS CAST BY ONE OF THE PERMANENT MEMBER SANCTUARIES
WHICH IS NOW THREATENING TO VETO YOUR SON'S VISIT.
throb
WHICH SANCTUARY?

Le SANCTUAIRE UPPER FELDA des RICKE et JOANNE, LESBIENNES
GUM
GUM
PLEASE TELL CEREBUS YOU JUST MADE THAT UP.
OH, NO SIR!
flip.flip.
IN FACT I WAS JUST READING IN THE "ROBBINS' GUIDE TO ESTARCION'S SANCTUARIES..."
flip.
AH!
"Le SANCTUAIRE UPPER FELDA des RICKE et JOANNE, LESBIENNES (founded 132 in the aftermath of the GREAT SCHISM) The adherents of the LSUFdReJL--citing the following passage from NEW JOANNE'S original interview notes [ref. The Sanctuary vs. The Seat of Truth: The Book of Cerebus Foundational Dogma, NEW JOANNE, Cast-Iron Fallopian Tube Press, Panrovy, 131 page 287 (originally published in an edited form in Friends of Yoohwhoo Très Glam Second Issue, Summermonth, 104 Cast-Iron Fallopian Tube Press)]: 'It was just like Girlyboy (Cerebus thought) to keep all the self-contained verses to himself' Pardon? Oh. [laughs] Girlyboy. That was the nickname Cerebus had for Rick back in the original Sanctuary. Cerebus never called him that to his face, of course.'"
--believe that Rick, like Cerebus, was a fully developed hermaphrodite and--owing to his greater size and weight--played the 'butch' role to Cerebus' 'femme' role in their relationship ('Cerebus never called him that to his face of course.') This belief evolved, by 135, into what is known to LSUFdReJL believers as the Mystery Doctrine of the Trinity, consisting of The MOTHER, The DAUGHTER and The SCARY-TAMPON (also known as the Mystery Doctrine of the THREE WISE VAGINAS) wherein Joanne incarnates as The MOTHER, Rick--the DAUGHTER and Cerebus as
ALL RIGHT.
ALL RIGHT.
CEREBUS BELIEVES YOU.


Wince.

OKAY.. SO TELL CEREBUS: WHY DO THESE PEOPLE WANT TO VETO SHEP SHEP'S VISIT?
ER- YOU REALLY WANT ME TO TELL YOU, SIR?
OF COURSE! WHATEVER THE REASON IS IT CAN'T BE ANY STUPIDER THAN WHAT YOU JUST READ OUT OF THAT IDIOT BOOK.

THEY'RE AFRAID YOU WANT TO HAVE SEX WITH HIM.

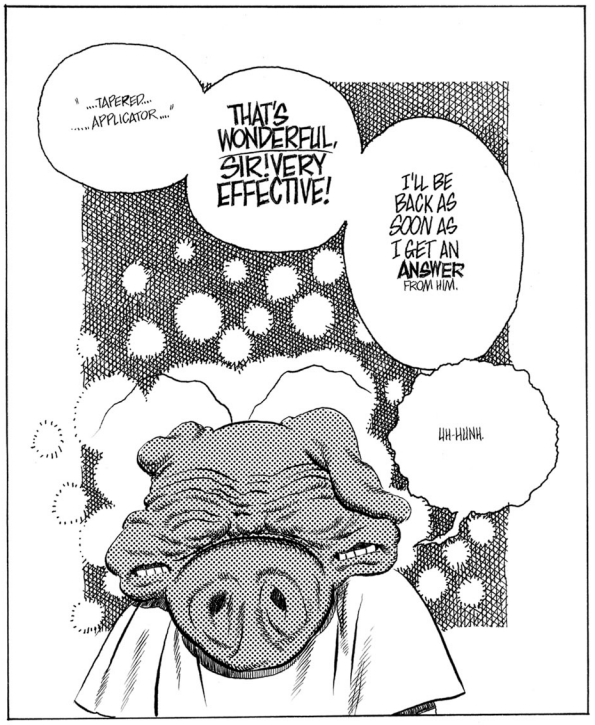
THAT LAST COMMENT? WHEN CEREBUS SAID, "WHATEVER THE REASON IS, IT CAN'T BE ANY STUPIDER THAN WHAT YOU JUST READ OUT OF THAT IDIOT BOOK." ?
YES, SIR?
CEREBUS TAKES THAT BACK.

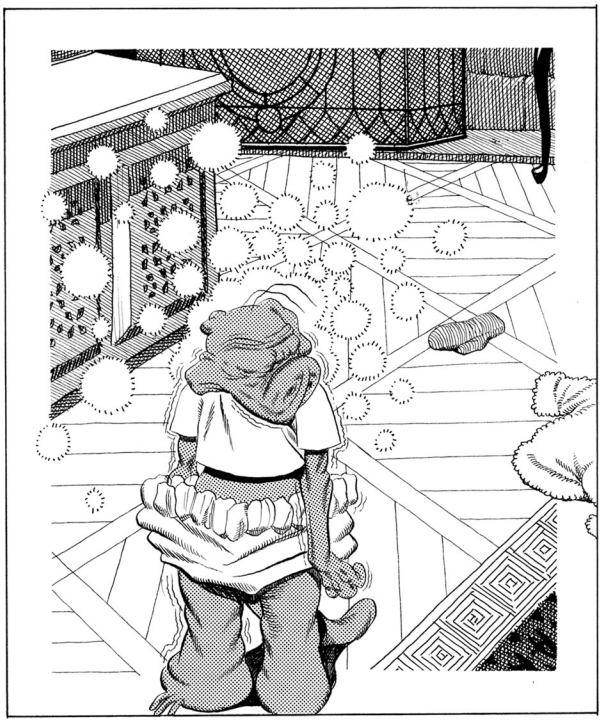
THEY THINK CEREBUS WANTS TO HAVE SEX WITH HIS OWN SON?!
CRINK CRINK CRINK CRINK
WELL... THEY'RE... THEY'RE FROM UPPER FELDA, SIR.
SO THEY'RE uhm. THEY'RE uhm
GUM
GUM
THEY'RE A LITTLE...
GUM GUM
GUM GUM
MORE THAN A LITTLE!
YES, SIR. WELL PUT, SIR.
CRINK CRINK CRINK CRINK CRINK

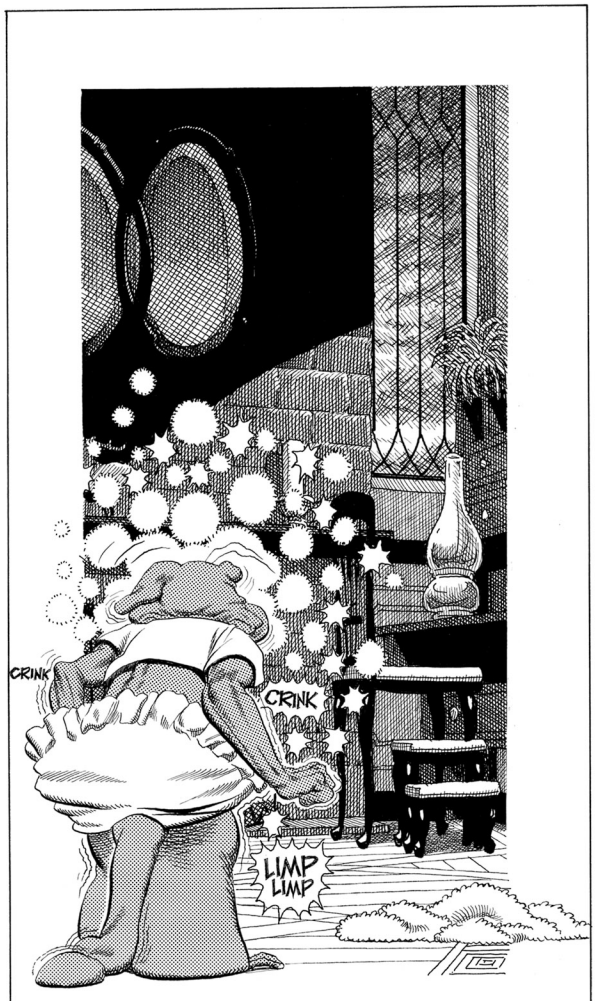
Byyyyy GUM.
Saaay-- HOW DID YOU MANAGE TO GET ALL THE WAY TO UPPER FELDA AND BACK JUST SINCE...
...YESTERDAY?
SPEAK UP!
(JUST SINCE...?) OH, NO SIR. YOU SEE IN A HEIGHTENED CODE RED...
IN A HEIGHTENED CODE RED ALERT, ALL OF THE HEADS OF THE MEMBER SANCTUARIES OF THE UNITED SANCTUARIES SECURITY COUNCIL ARE BROUGHT HERE UNDER ARMED ESCORT, SIR, AND LOCKED UP IN THEIR RESPECTIVE CONVIVIALITY SEGREGATION SUITES

GUM
GUM
GUM
THAT'S A DARNED GOOD IDEA.
WHO CAME UP WITH THAT?
er..YOU DID, SIR!
(NO WONDER CEREBUS LIKES IT)
THE SECURITY COUNCIL WOULD ONLY GO ALONG WITH IT IF YOU AGREED TO BE
YOU'RE SHOUTING AGAIN, O'VERILY!
(SORRY, SIR) IF YOU AGREED TO BE LOCKED UP, AS WELL
O'VERILY?
YES, SIR?
YOU GO AND TELL THAT QUICHE-SNORTING, CHAMPAGNE-SWILLING, UPPER FELDA-LA-DEE-DA POOFTAH
CRINK CRINK
THAT IF HE SO MUCH AS DREAMS OF VETOING SHEP-SHEP'S VISIT
CEREBUS WILL PRAY GOD HIMSELF TO TAKE THAT SNAIL-EATING
er--THE UPPER FELDANS DON'T BELIEVE IN GOD ANYMORE, SIR.
DON'T BELIEVE IN GOD.
NO SIR.
JUST... uhm ...JUST IN...

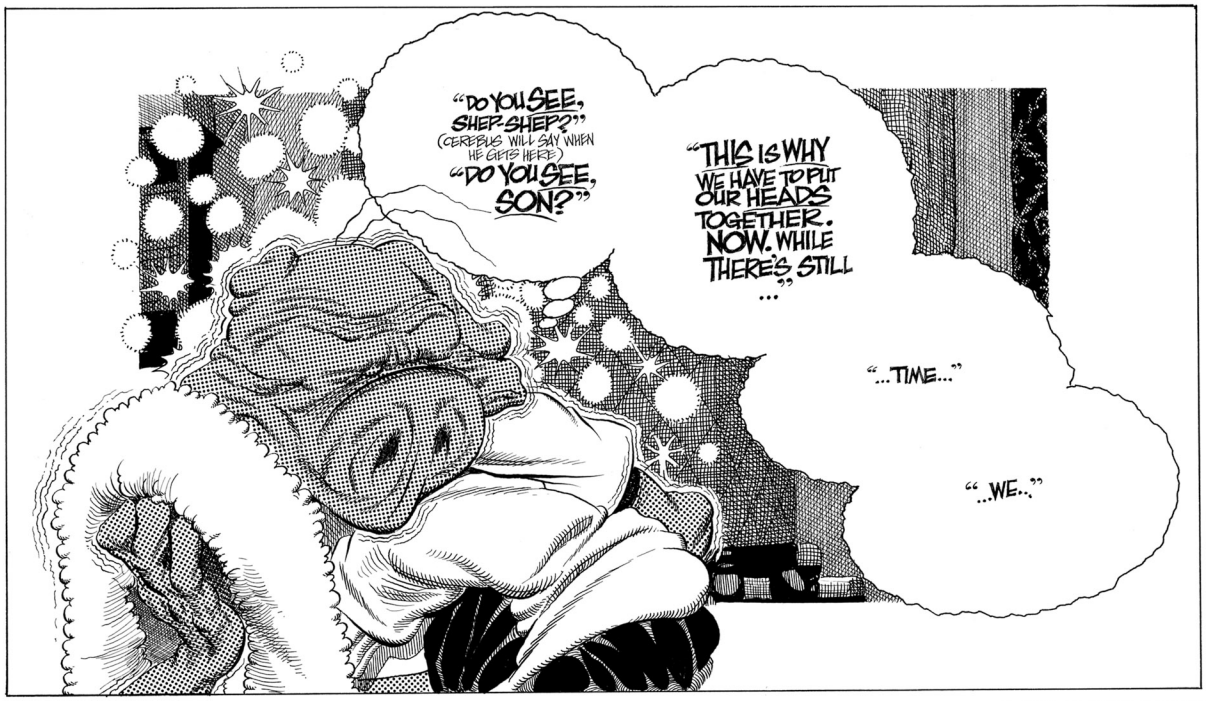
THE MOTHER
THE uh DAUGHTER
AND THE --uh-- SCARY --uh-- TAMPON
PLOP.
GOT A PEN?
YES SIR.
WRITE THIS DOWN.
SPEAKETH THOU UNTO THE UPPER FELDAN SAYING UNTO HIM: THUS SAYEST CEREBUS, THE SCARY TAMPON, UNTO THE "FLAMER" SANCTUAIRE:
THINKEST THAT THOU ART AFFRIGHTED BY THE SCARY TAMPON IN THIS WORLD? YEA! VERILY! IFSOBE THOU STICKEST NOT THY VETO WHERE-UNTO THE SUN SHINEST NOT, IN THE WORLD WHICH IS TO COME, HE-WHO-IS-THE-SUPER-ABSORBANT SHALT SPROUT TEN HORNS AND SEVEN PRUNING HOOKS!
YEA! AND HE-WHO-DOTH-PENETRATE-BUT-IS-NOT-PENETRATED SHALT IMPALE THAT ORIFICE WHICH THOU WINCEST JUST TO THINK ABOUT!
YEA! AND SIDE-WAYS!
YEA! AND WITH FOUR-SPEED ROTARY ACTION!
THUS SPEAKEST HE-WHO-IS-WITHIN-THE-EASY-GRIP-TAPERED-APPLICATOR
SKTCH


"...TAPERED... ...APPLICATOR..."
THAT'S WONDERFUL, SIR! VERY EFFECTIVE!
I'LL BE BACK AS SOON AS I GET AN ANSWER FROM HIM.
UH-HUNH.

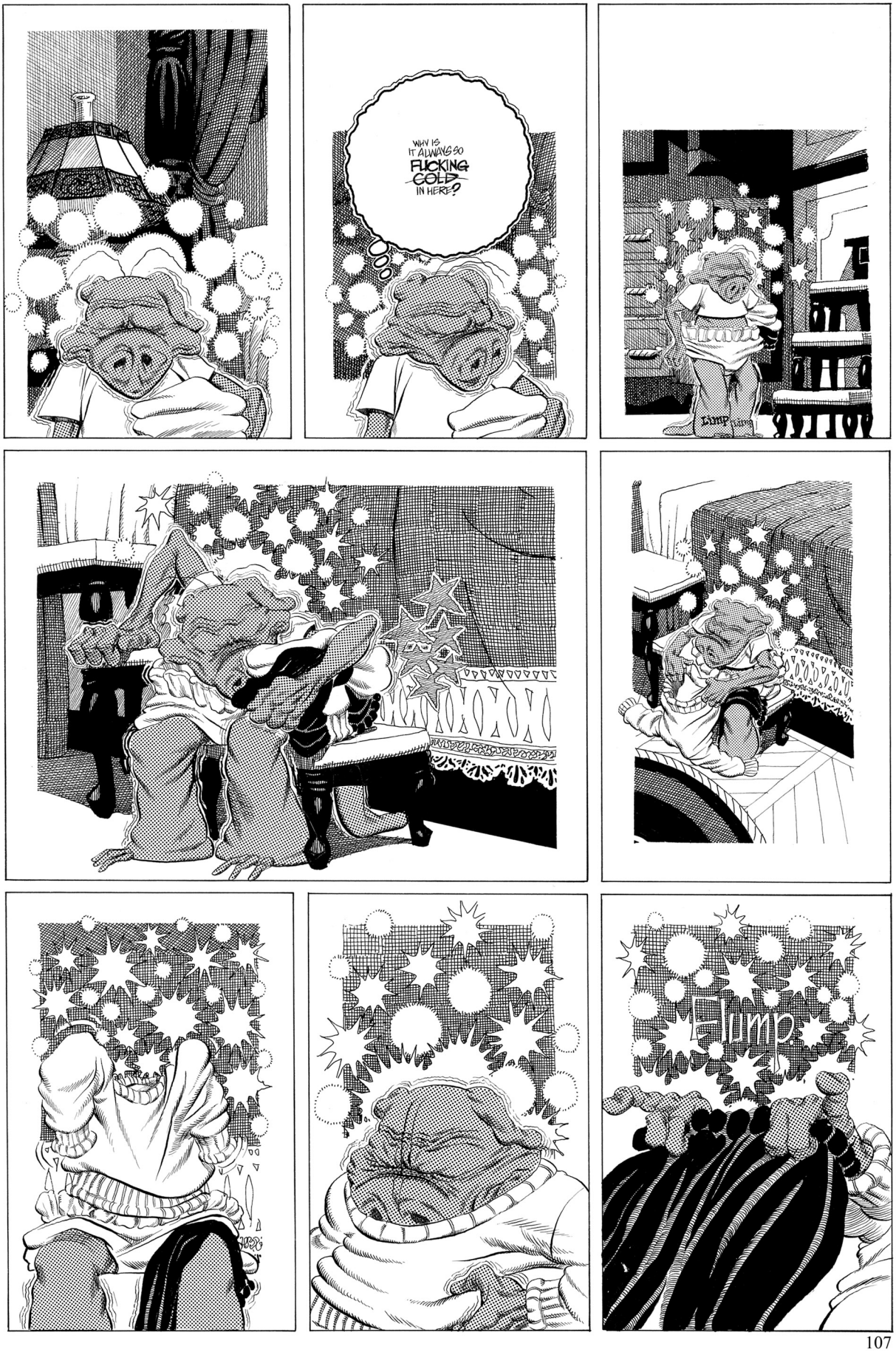


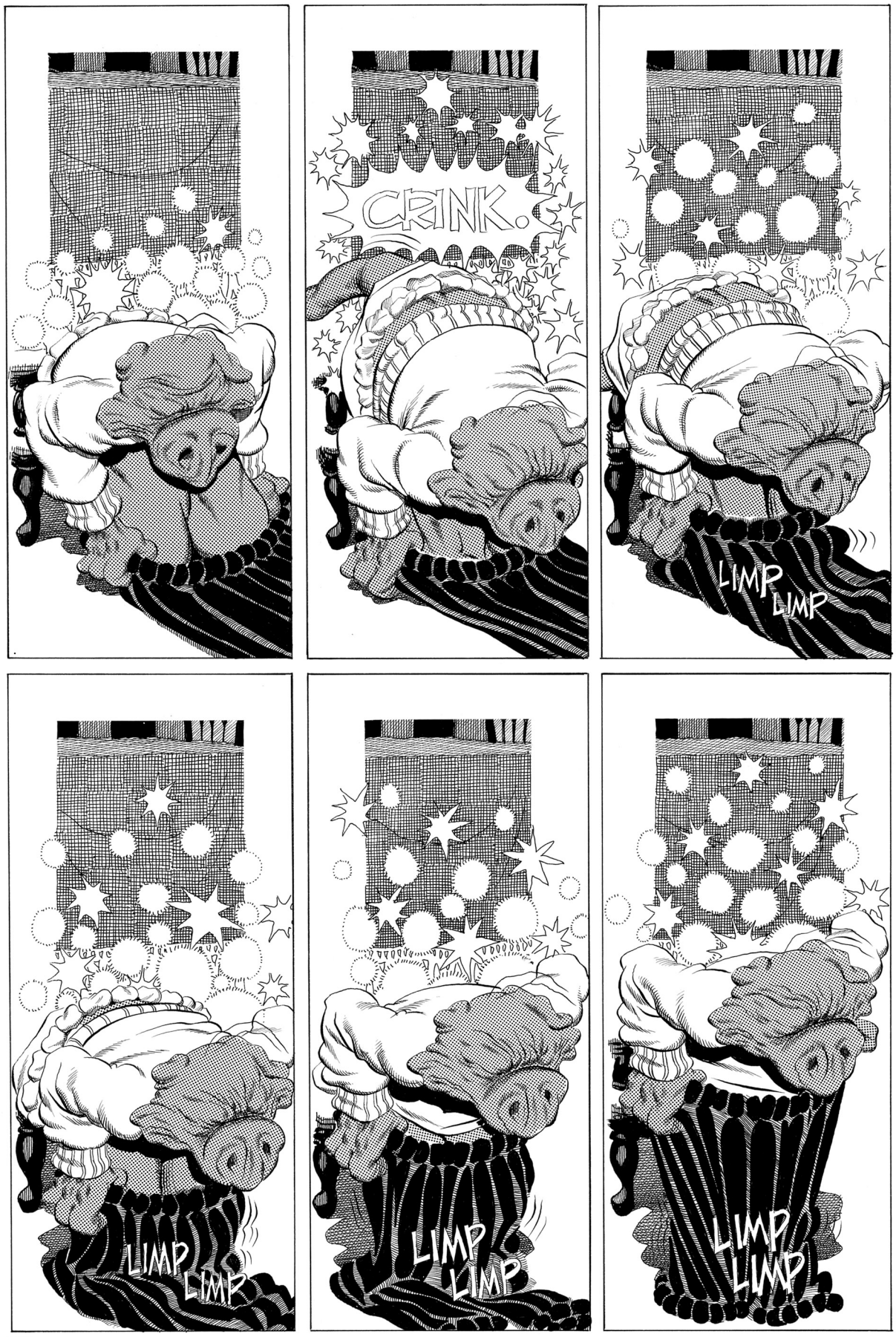

CRINK
CRINK
LIMP
LIMP

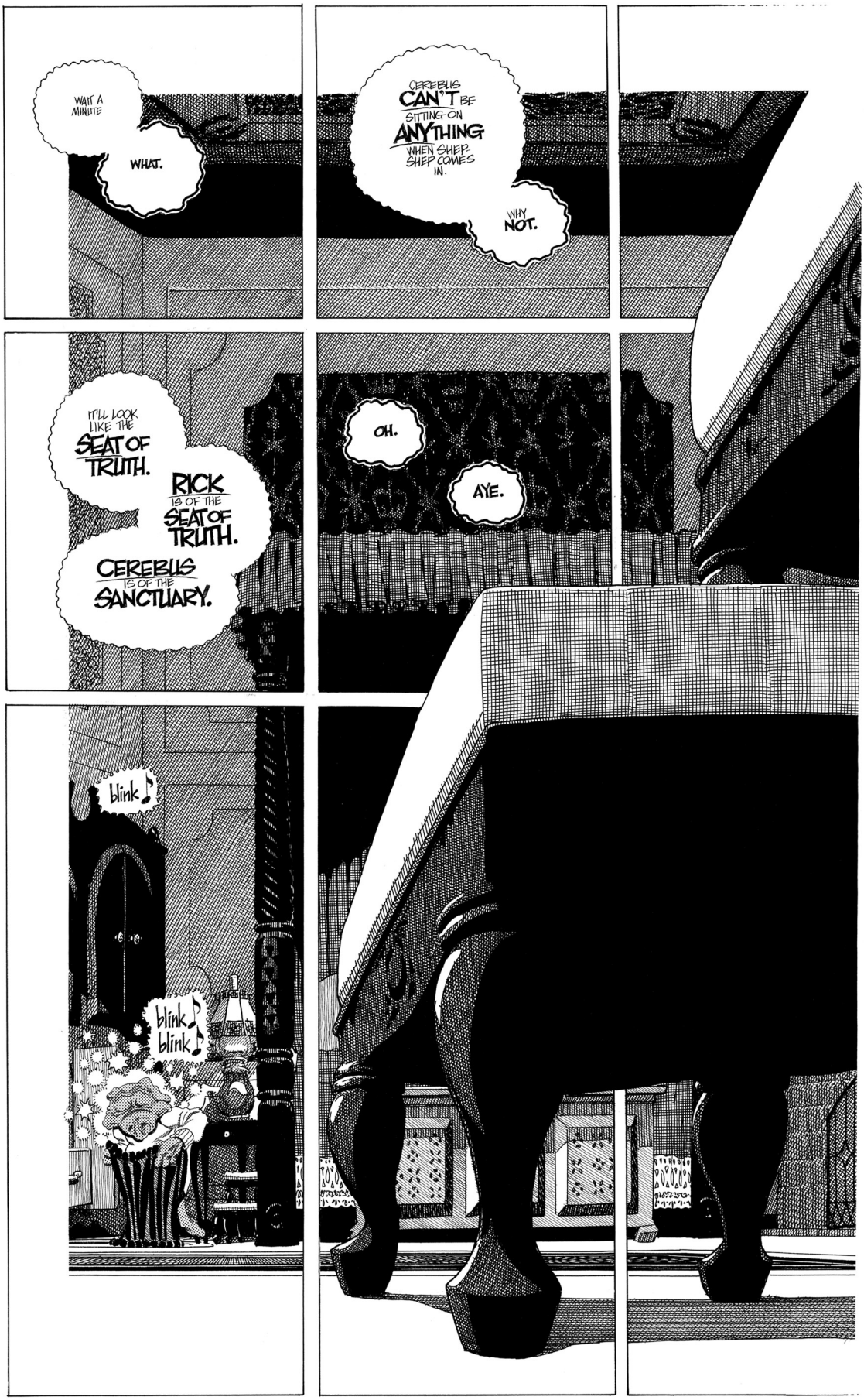
SCARY. TAMPON. (UNBELIEVABLE)

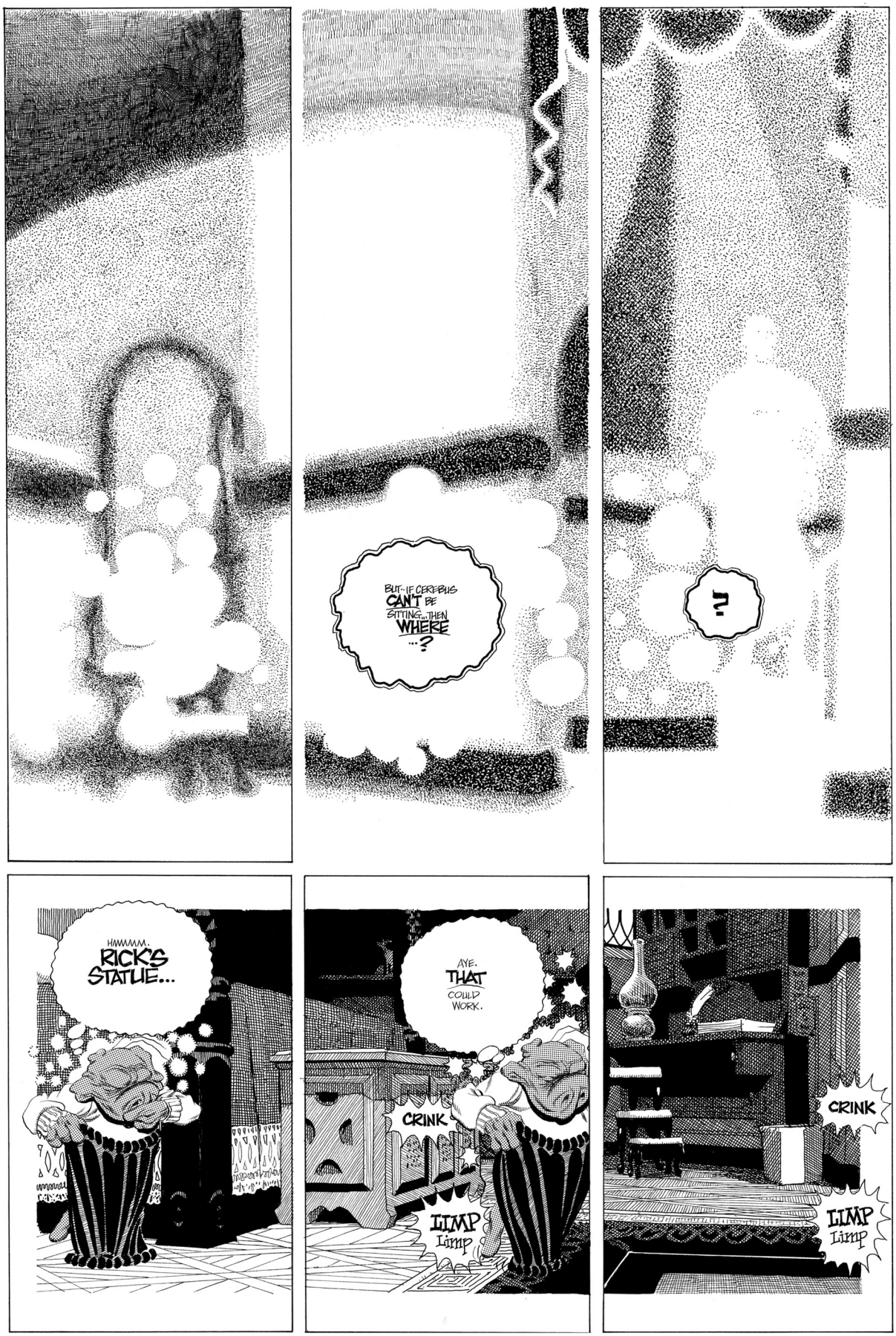

"DO YOU SEE, SHEP-SHEP?"
(CEREBUS WILL SAY WHEN HE GETS HERE)
"DO YOU SEE, SON?"
"THIS IS WHY WE HAVE TO PUT OUR HEADS TOGETHER. NOW. WHILE THERE'S STILL ..."
"...TIME..."
"...WE..."

"WE HAVE TO FIGURE OUT WHAT WENT WRONG"
"AND"
"AND FIX IT"
"FIGURE OUT HOW THESE.....THESE..... PEOPLE MADE RICK INTO A..... A....LESBIAN"
STUFF
STUFF

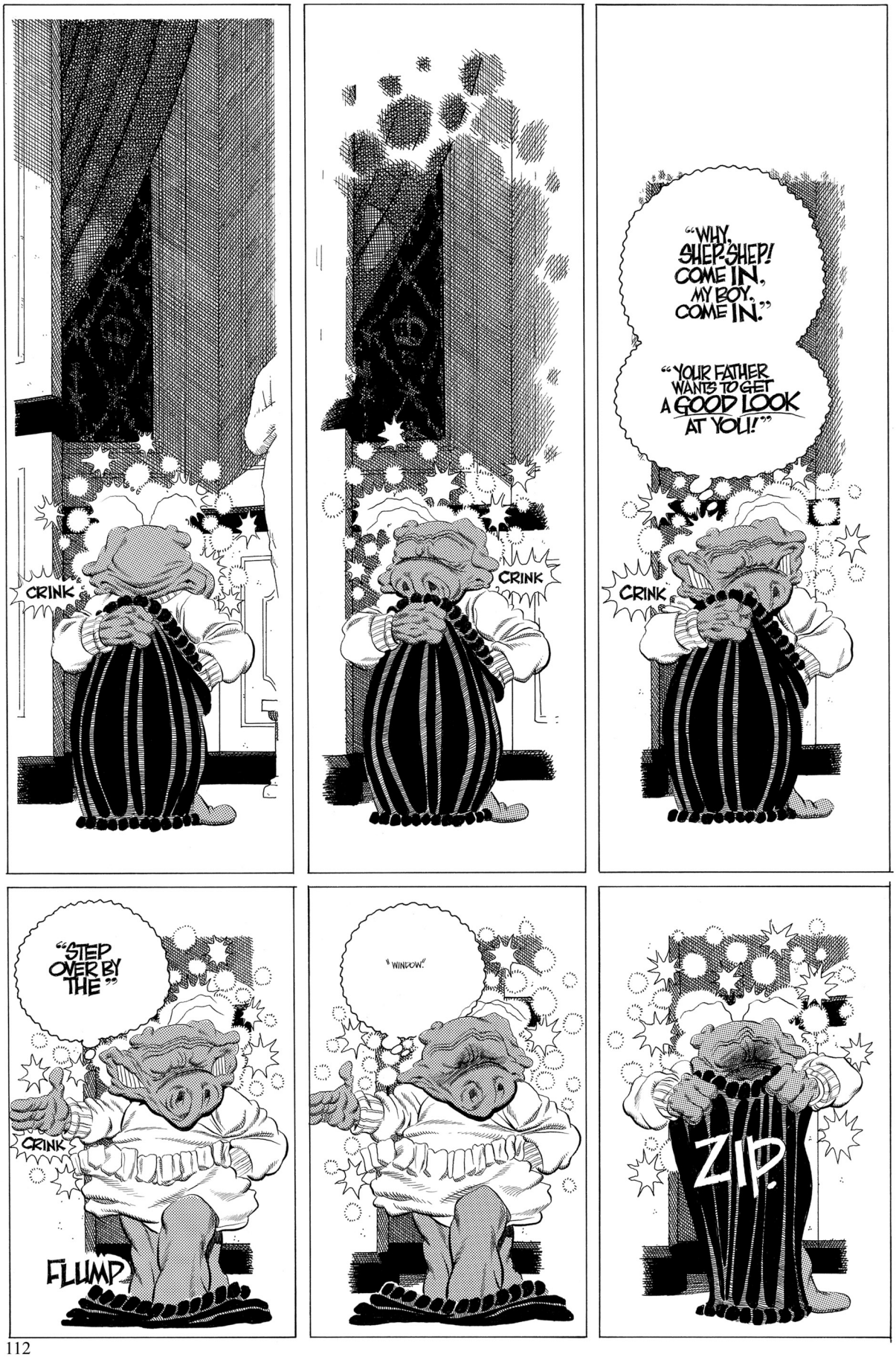

WHY IS IT ALWAYS SO FUCKING COLD IN HERE?
Lump
Lump


CRINK.
LIMP LIMP
LIMP LIMP
LIMP LIMP
LIMP LIMP

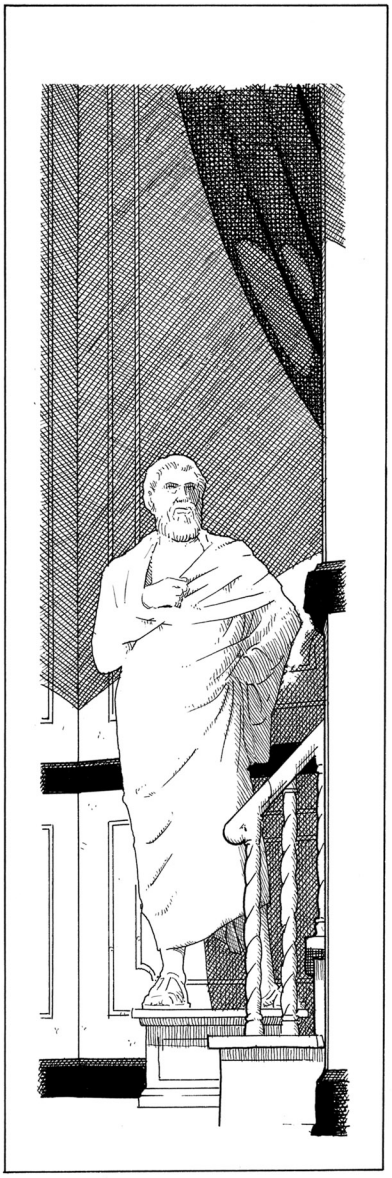

WAIT A MINUTE
WHAT.
CEREBUS CAN'T BE SITTING ON ANYTHING WHEN SHEP SHEP COMES IN.
WHY NOT.
IT'LL LOOK LIKE THE SEAT OF TRUTH.
RICK IS OF THE SEAT OF TRUTH.
CEREBUS IS OF THE SANCTUARY.
OH.
AYE.
blink♪
blink♪ blink♪


BUT... IF CERBERUS CAN'T BE SITTING... THEN WHERE ...?
?
HMMMM. RICK'S STATUE...
AYE. THAT COULD WORK.
CRINK
LIMP Limp
CRINK
LIMP Limp

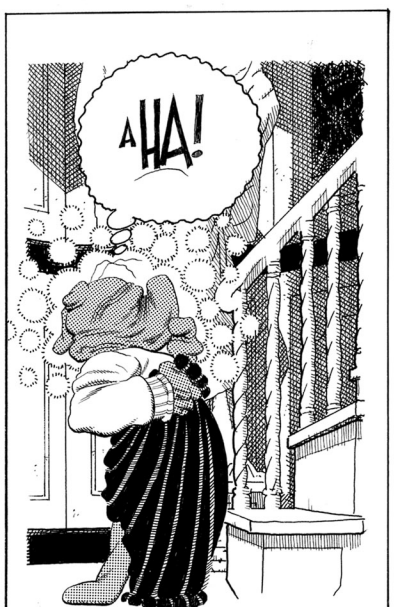
OKAY.
SO CERBERUS IS STANDING HERE AND THERE'S A KNOCK AT THE DOOR. (KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK)
"COME IN?" SAYS CERBERUS. (SHEP-SHEP WALKS IN)
"AH, SHEP-SHEP, MY BOY! COME IN, COME IN."
CRINK
"STAND OVER THERE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE CARPET, MY SON, SO FATHER CAN GET A GOOD LOOK AT YOU."
"RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF THE*"
CRINK
NAY, THAT'S NO GOOD. HE'LL THINK THERE'S A TRAP DOOR OR SOMETHING
AYE.
NEEDS TO BE SOMEPLACE IN A STRAIGHT LINE FROM THE STATUE THROUGH CERBERUS TO...
CRINK
LIMP
Limp

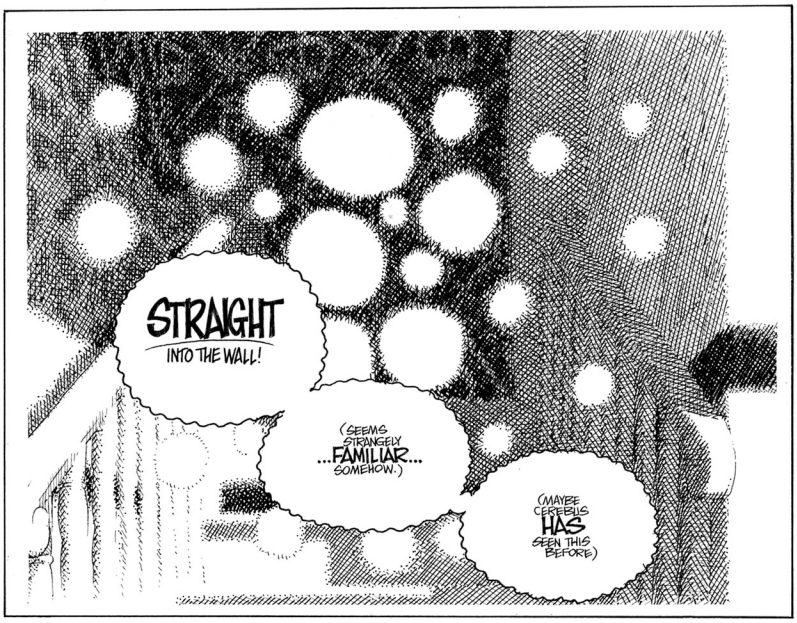

CRINK
CRINK
"WHY, SHEP-SHEP! COME IN, MY BOY, COME IN."
"YOUR FATHER WANTS TO GET A GOOD LOOK AT YOU!"
CRINK
"STEP OVER BY THE"
CRINK
FLUMP
WINDOW."
ZIP.

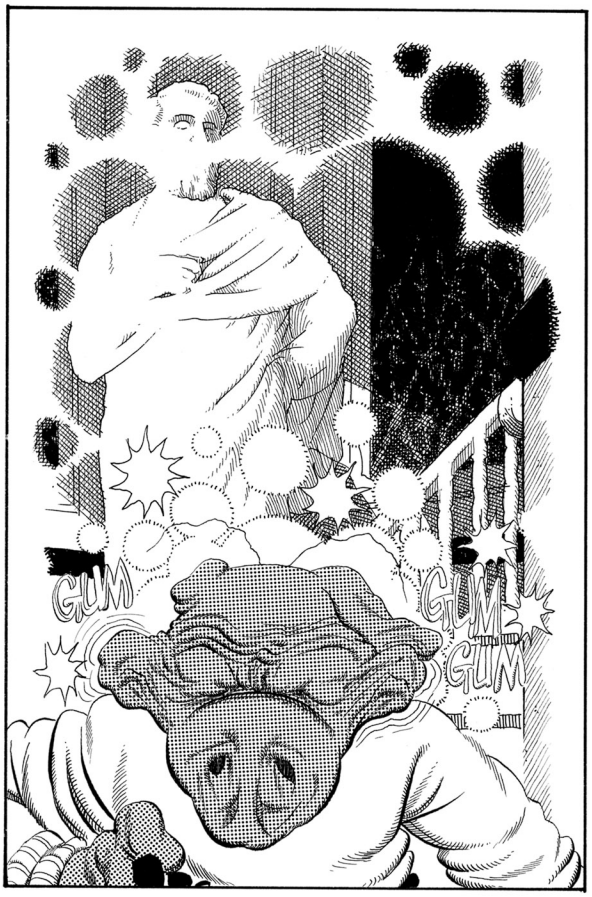
GOOD POINT.
WHAT IF CEREBUS LOSES HIS PANTS WHILE HOLDING THAT GIRLYBOY STATUE POSE?
AYE. HM.
SO: CEREBUS CAN'T BE SITTING ON ANYTHING WHEN SHEP SHEP COMES IN AND CEREBUS CAN'T BE IMITATING THE FAGGY STATUE.
SO THAT LEAVES CEREBUS WITH... WHERE? WHERE IS CEREBUS GOING TO
CRINK CRINK CRINK CRINK
LIMP Limp LIMP Limp LIMP Limp



CRINK
CEREBUS CAN'T BELIEVE THAT CEREBUS HAS LIVED HERE FOR A HUNDRED AND FIFTY YEARS AND CEREBUS HAS NEVER ONCE LOOKED TO SEE WHERE THOSE STAIRS NEXT TO THE FAGGY STATUE GO.
LIMP Limp
(MAYBE THEY LEAD TO AN UNLOCKED SECRET EXIT? THEN ALL CEREBUS WOULD NEED TO DO IS TO FIND A PIECE OF TWO-BY-FOUR ...
CRINK
... TRACK DOWN THAT UPPER FIELDS TROUBLEMAKER AND DISCUSS A LITTLE ...THEOLOGY... WITH 'IM)
LIMP Limp
CRINK
LIMP Limp

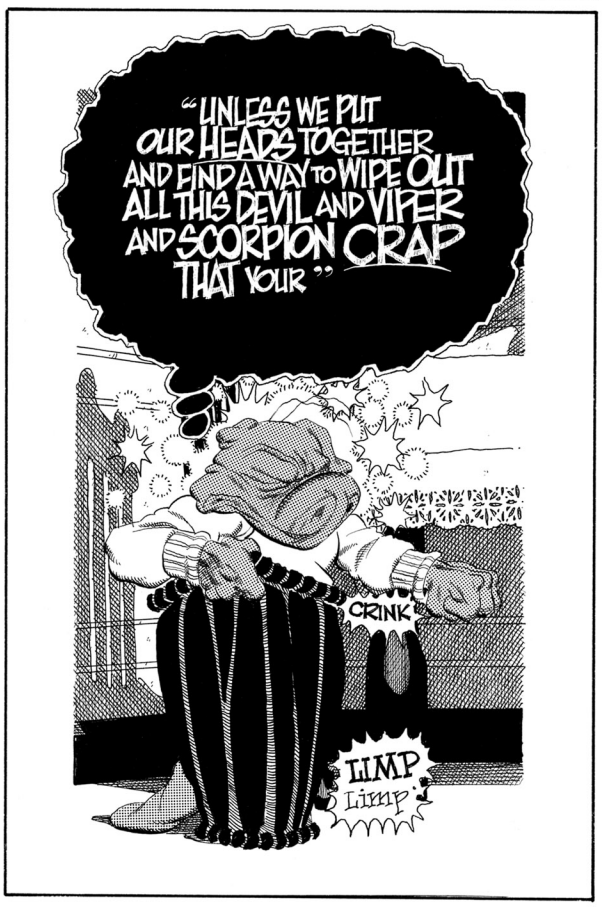

AHA!

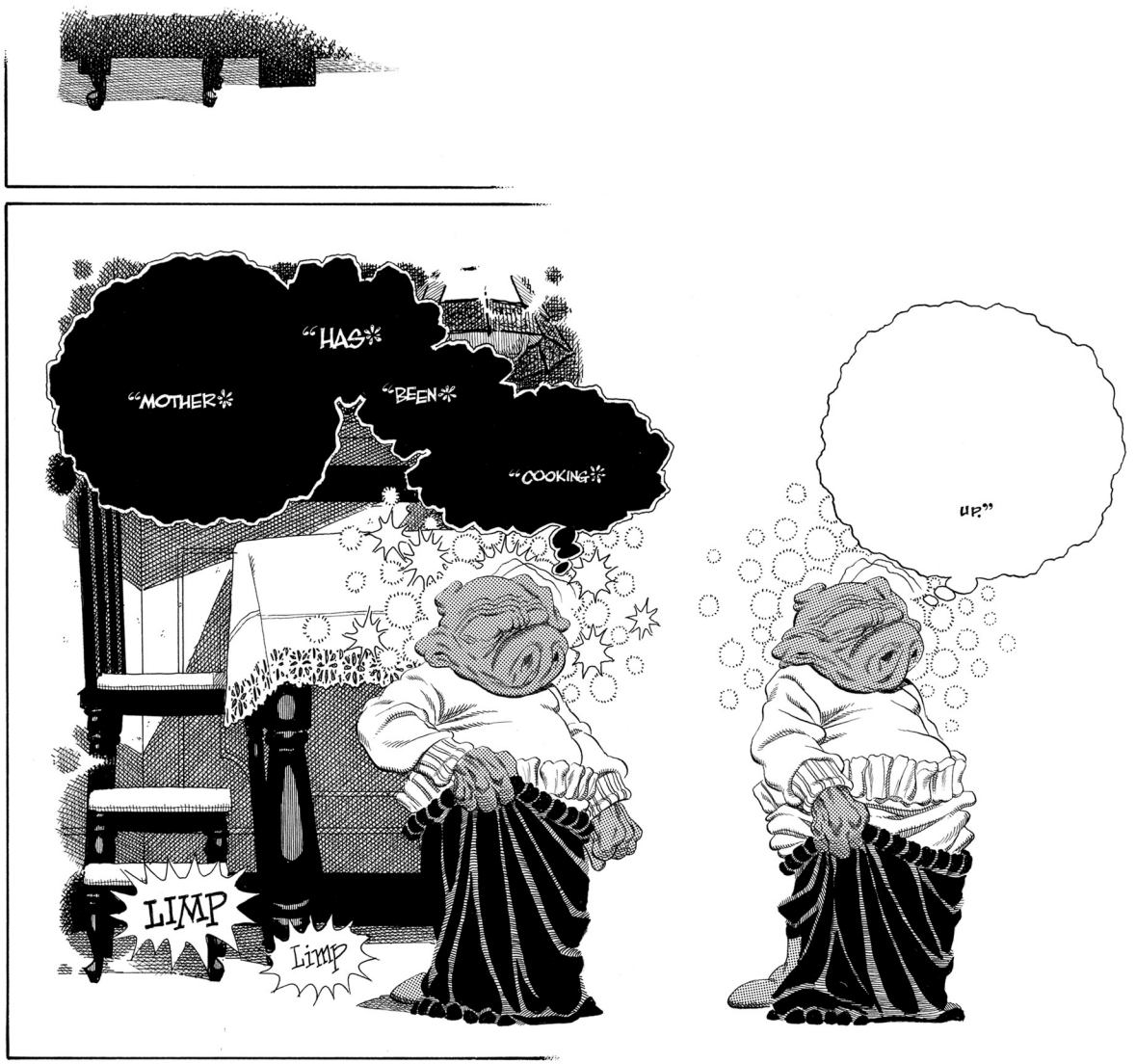

STRAIGHT INTO THE WALL!
(SEEMS STRANGELY ...FAMILIAR... SOMEHOW.)
(MAYBE CEREBUS HAS SEEN THIS BEFORE)

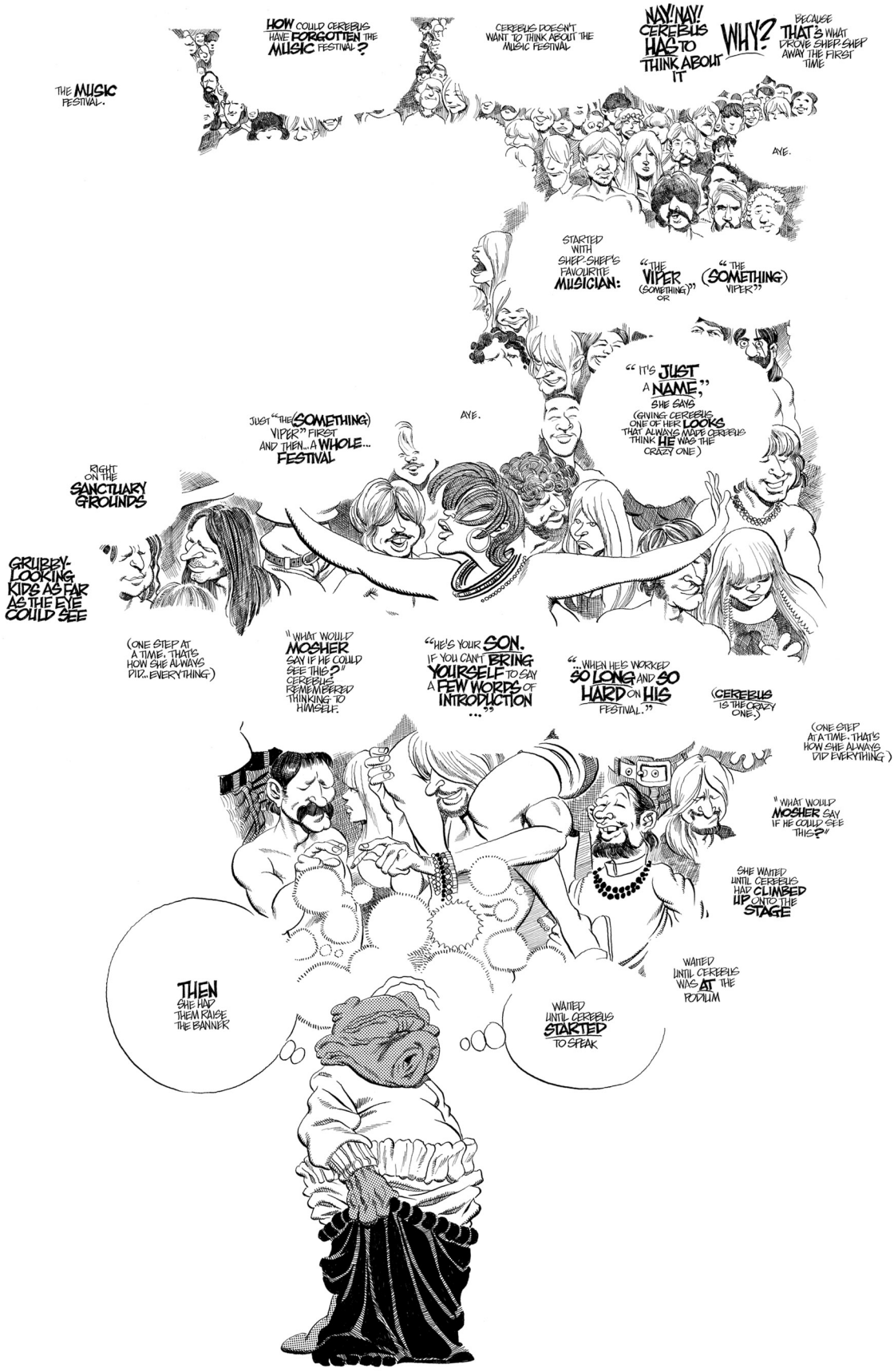

GUM
GUM
GUM
GUM

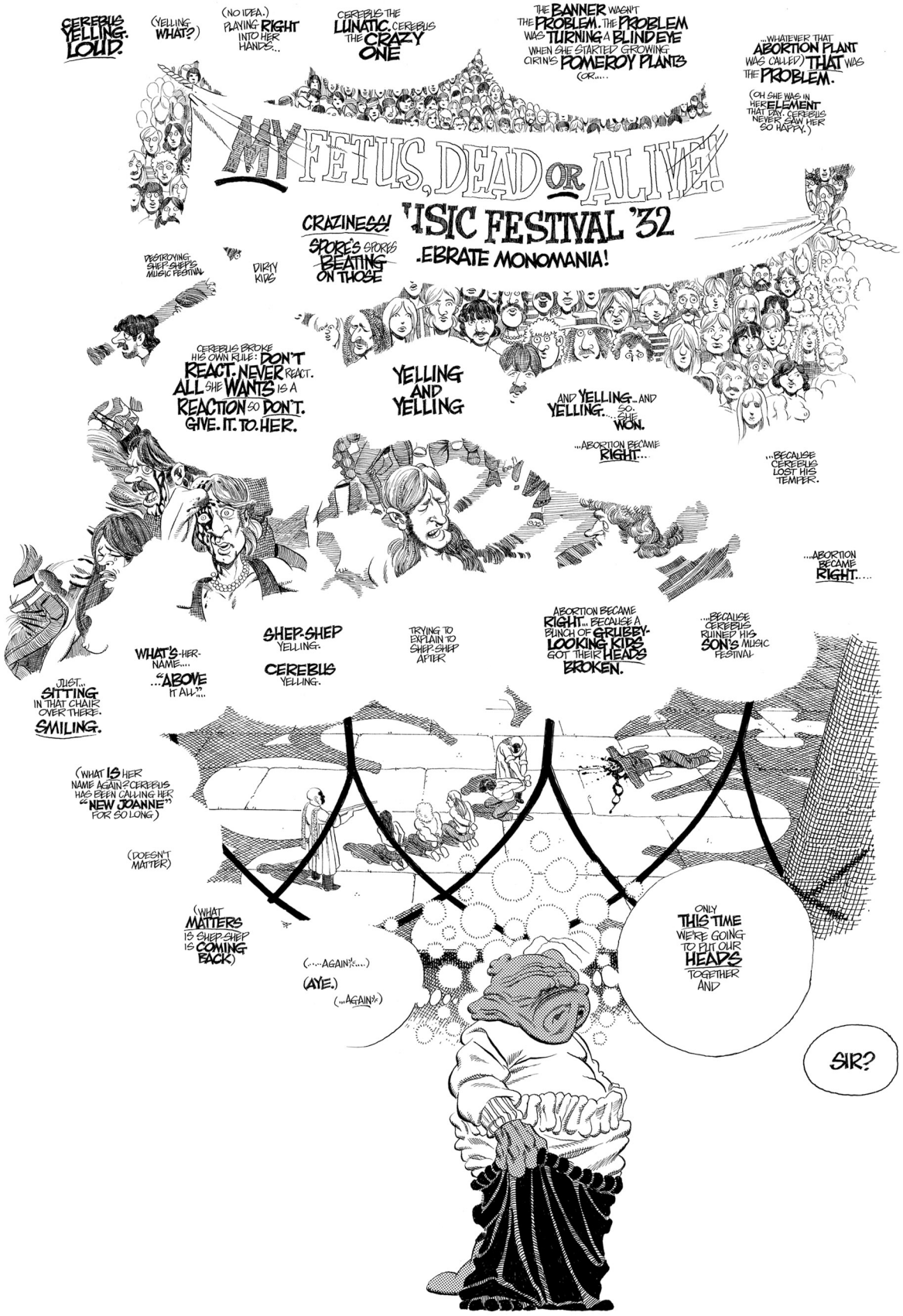
LOOK.
CEREBUS HAS TO FORGET ABOUT ALL THAT SYMBOLISTIC STUFF--- SITTING OR STANDING STATUE OR NO STATUE--
SHEP-SHEP IS GOING TO BE HERE ANY MINUTE!
WHAT CEREBUS HAS TO FIGURE OUT IS WHAT WE'RE GOING TO DO TO FIGHT BACK!
"YOU DON'T WANT TO BE KNOWN AS 'SHEP-SHEP, SON OF SCARY TAMPON' DO YOU, BOY?"
CRINK
LIMP
LIMP

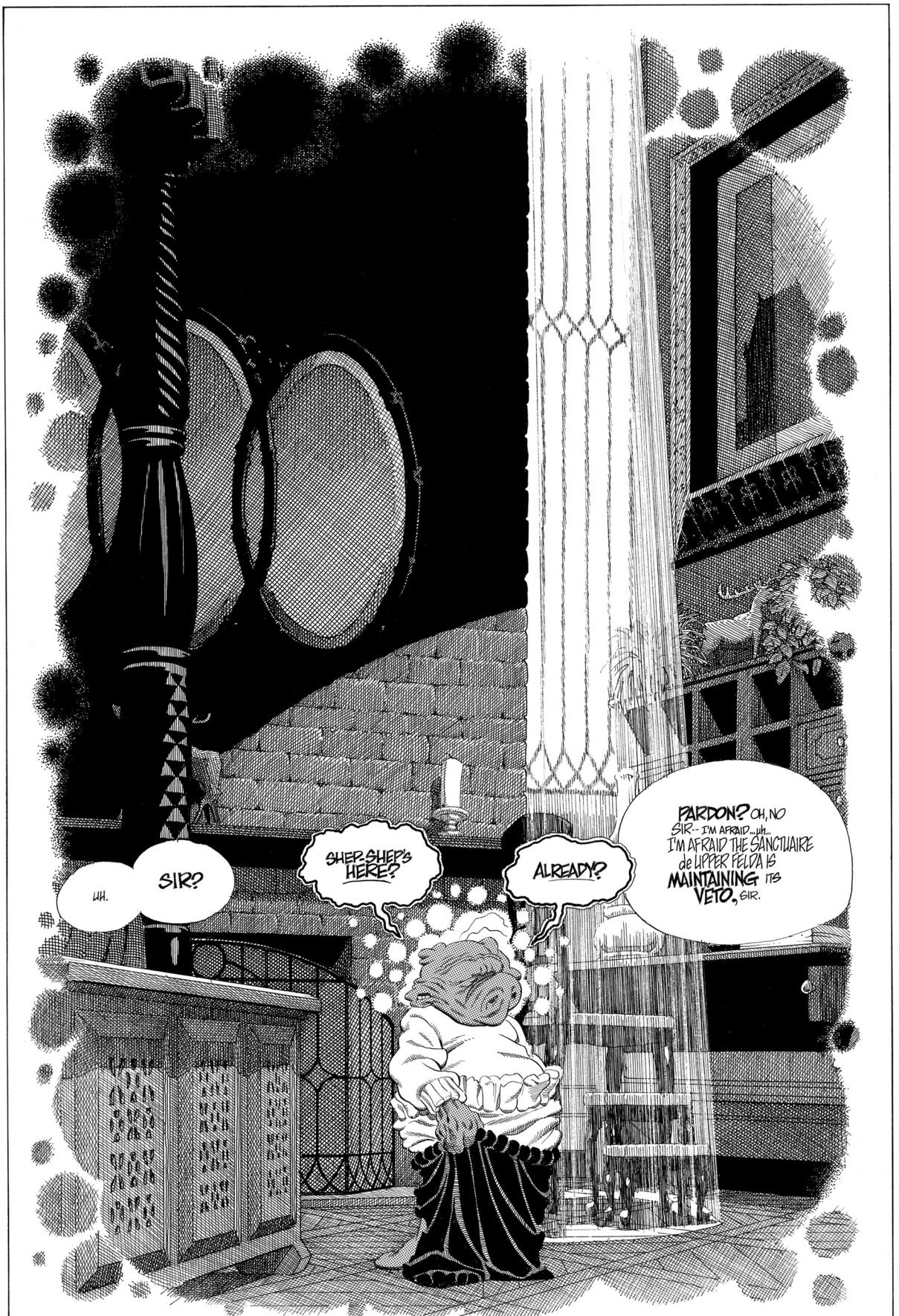
SAAAAY THAT'S PRETTY GOOD.
THEN WHAT WILL CEREBUS SAY?
THEN CEREBUS WILL SAY: "SHEP-SHEP?"

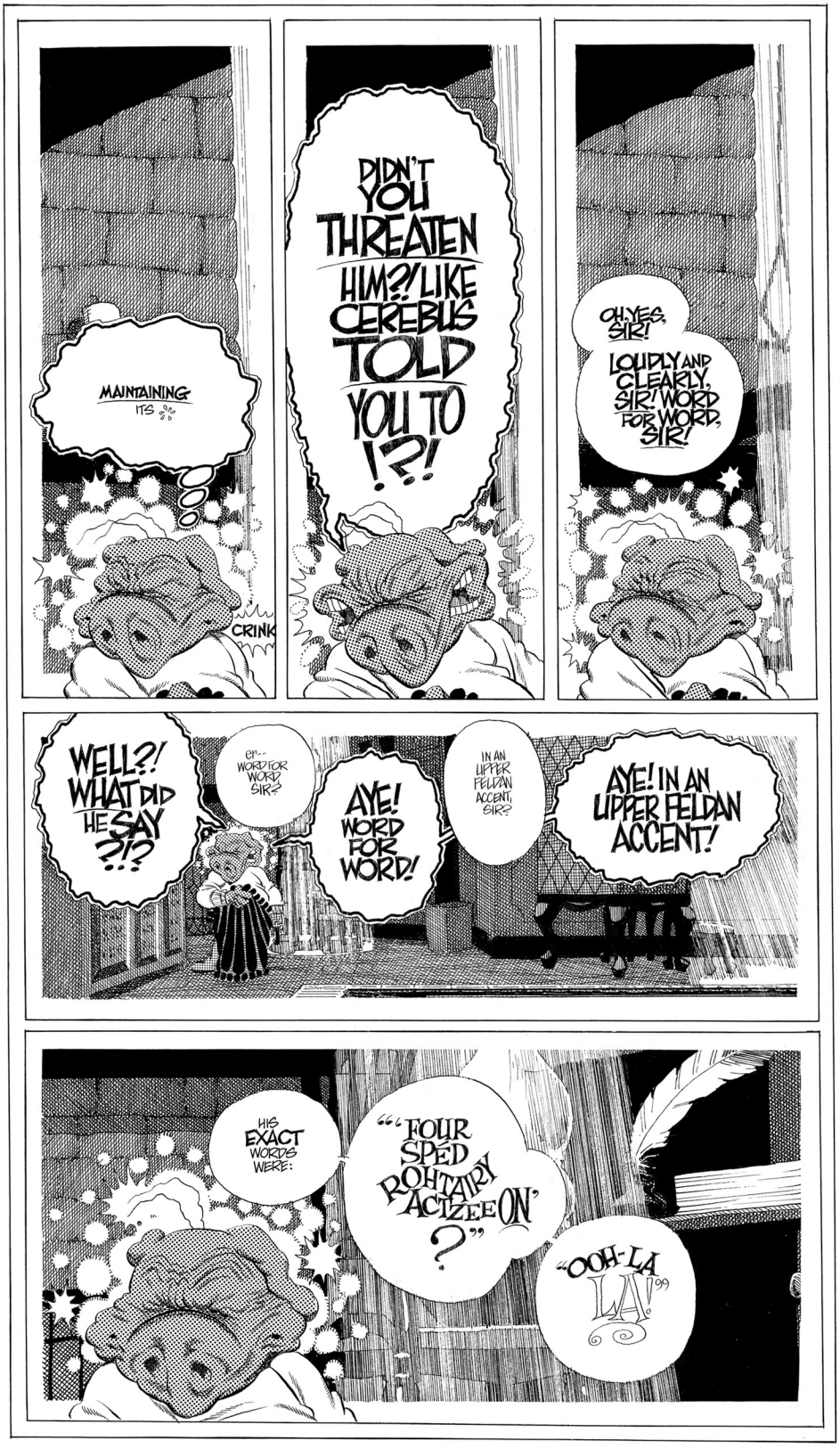

"UNLESS WE PUT OUR HEADS TOGETHER AND FIND A WAY TO WIPE OUT ALL THIS DEVIL AND VIPER AND SCORPION CRAP THAT YOUR"
CRINK
LIMP
LIMP

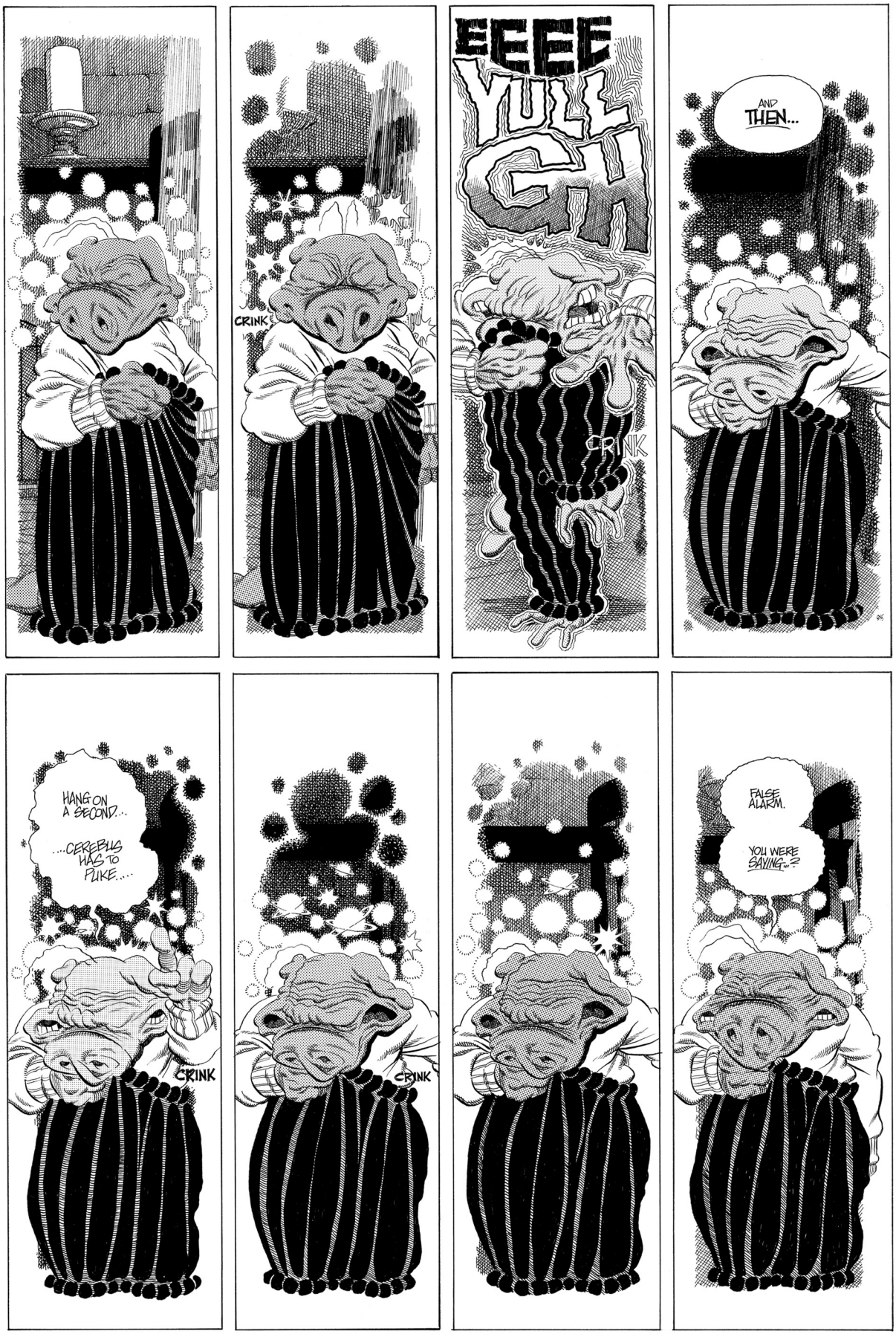

"HAS
"MOTHER
"BEEN
"COOKING
UP."
LIMP
Limp

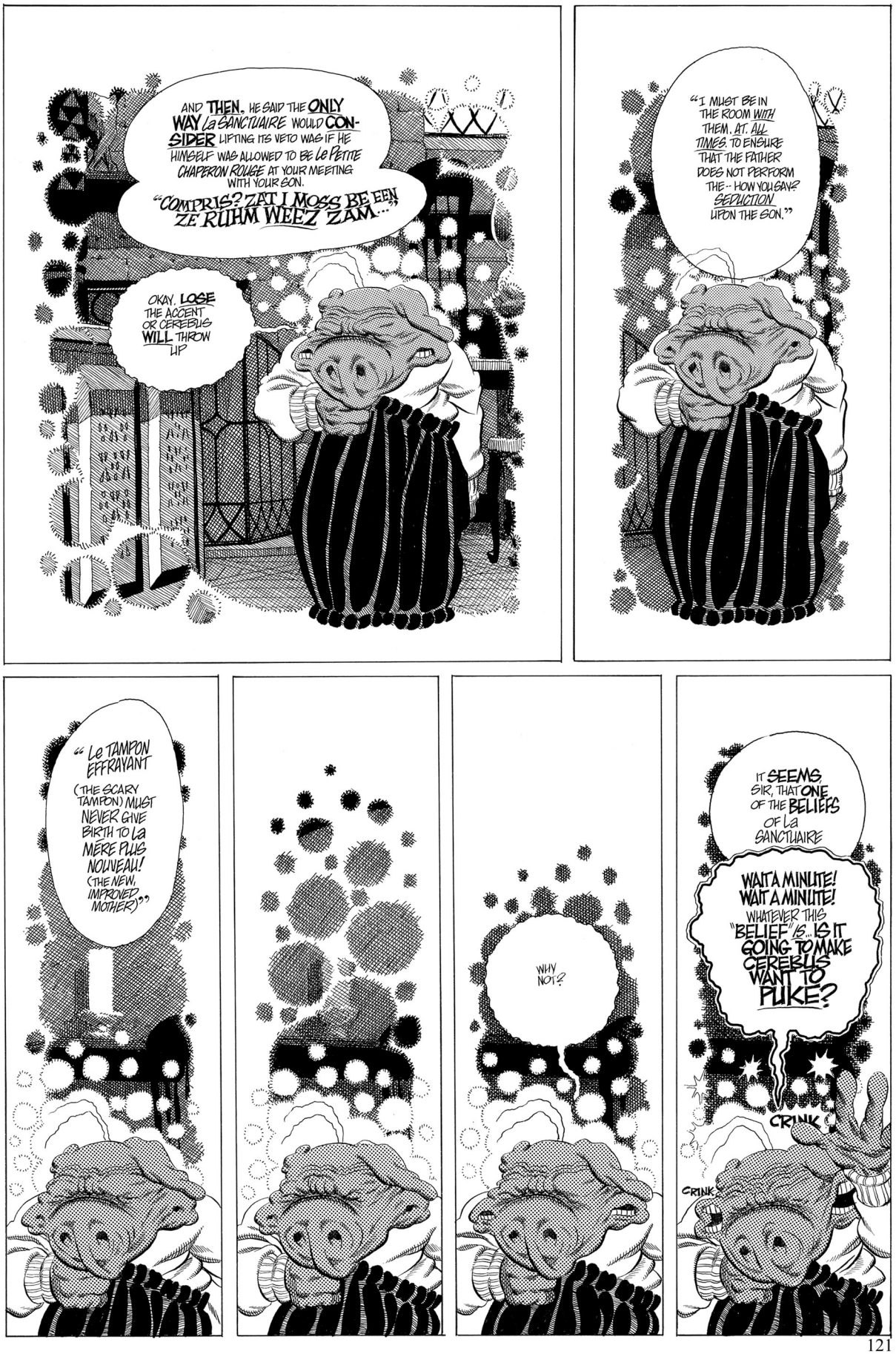

THE MUSIC FESTIVAL.
HOW COULD CEREBUS HAVE FORGOTTEN THE MUSIC FESTIVAL?
CEREBUS DOESN'T WANT TO THINK ABOUT THE MUSIC FESTIVAL
NAY! NAY! CEREBUS HAS TO THINK ABOUT IT
WHY?
BECAUSE THAT'S WHAT DROVE SHEP-SHEP AWAY THE FIRST TIME
AYE.
STARTED WITH SHEP-SHEP'S FAVOURITE MUSICIAN:
"THE VIPER (SOMETHING)" OR "THE (SOMETHING) VIPER"
"IT'S JUST A NAME," SHE SAYS (GIVING CEREBUS ONE OF HER LOOKS THAT ALWAYS MADE CEREBUS THINK HE WAS THE CRAZY ONE)
AYE.
JUST "THE (SOMETHING) VIPER" FIRST AND THEN... A WHOLE... FESTIVAL
RIGHT ON THE SANCTUARY GROUNDS
GRUBBY-LOOKING KIDS AS FAR AS THE EYE COULD SEE
(ONE STEP AT A TIME. THAT'S HOW SHE ALWAYS DID.. EVERYTHING)
"WHAT WOULD MOSHER SAY IF HE COULD SEE THIS?" CEREBUS REMEMBERED THINKING TO HIMSELF.
"HE'S YOUR SON. IF YOU CAN'T BRING YOURSELF TO SAY A FEW WORDS OF INTRODUCTION ..."
"...WHEN HE'S WORKED SO LONG AND SO HARD ON HIS FESTIVAL."
(CEREBUS IS THE CRAZY ONE.)
(ONE STEP AT A TIME. THAT'S HOW SHE ALWAYS DID EVERYTHING.)
"WHAT WOULD MOSHER SAY IF HE COULD SEE THIS?"
SHE WAITED UNTIL CEREBUS HAD CLIMBED UP ONTO THE STAGE
WAITED UNTIL CEREBUS WAS AT THE PODIUM
THEN SHE HAD THEM RAISE THE BANNER
WAITED UNTIL CEREBUS STARTED TO SPEAK

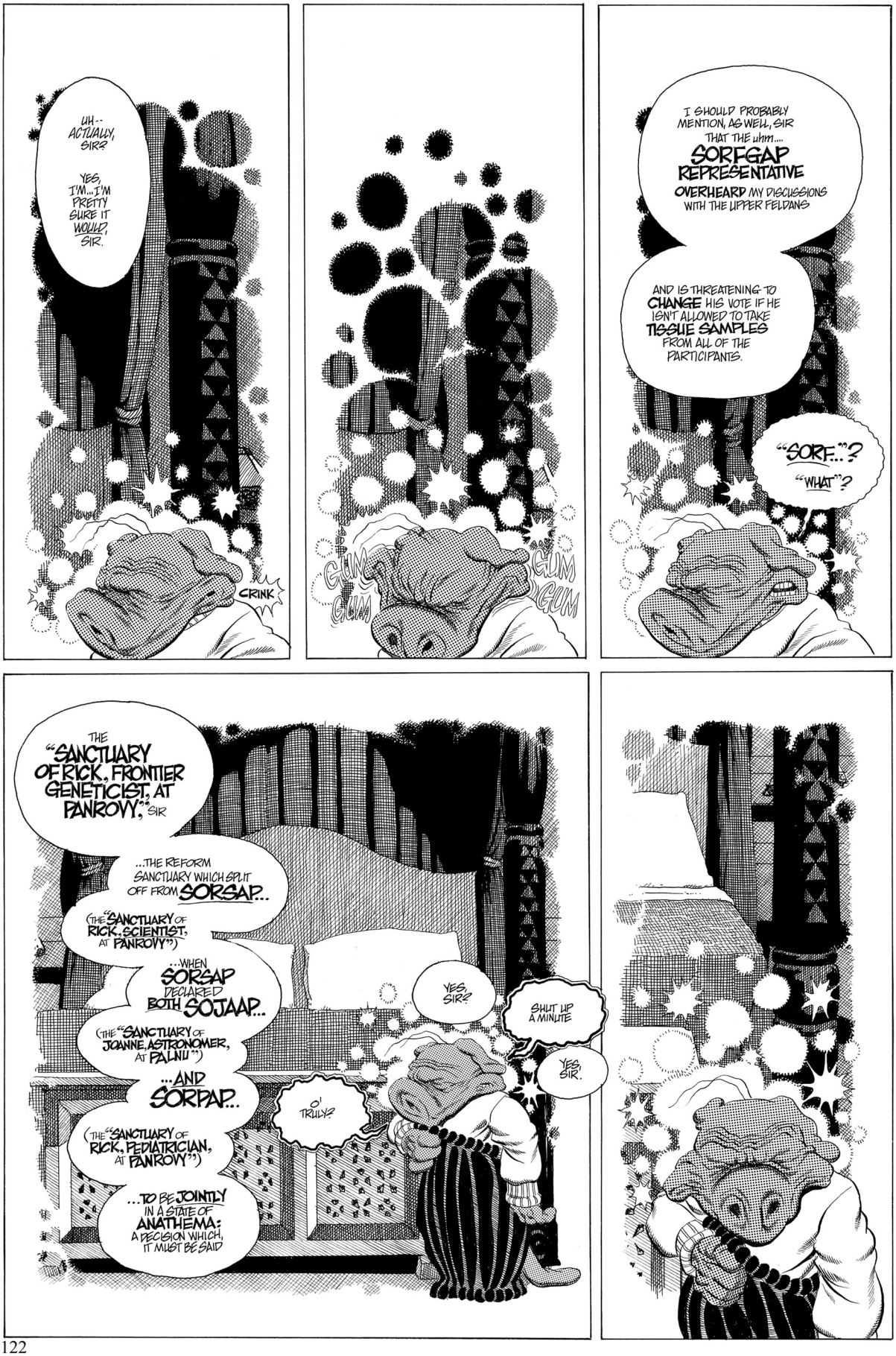

CEREBUS YELLING. LOUD!
(YELLING WHAT?)
(NO IDEA.) PLAYING RIGHT INTO HER HANDS..
CEREBUS THE LUNATIC. CEREBUS THE CRAZY ONE
THE BANNER WASN'T THE PROBLEM. THE PROBLEM WAS TURNING A BLIND EYE WHEN SHE STARTED GROWING CIRIN'S POMEROY PLANTS (OR.....
...WHATEVER THAT ABORTION PLANT WAS CALLED) THAT WAS THE PROBLEM.
(OH SHE WAS IN HER ELEMENT THAT DAY. CEREBUS NEVER SAW HER SO HAPPY.)
MY FETUS, DEAD OR ALIVE!
CRAZINESS!
'USIC FESTIVAL '32
SPORE'S SPORES BEATING ON THOSE
.EBRATE MONOMANIA!
DESTROYING SHEP-SHEP'S MUSIC FESTIVAL
DIRTY KIDS
CEREBUS BROKE HIS OWN RULE: DON'T REACT. NEVER REACT. ALL SHE WANTS IS A REACTION SO DON'T. GIVE. IT. TO. HER.
YELLING AND YELLING
AND YELLING... AND YELLING... SO. SHE WON.
...ABORTION BECAME RIGHT...
...BECAUSE CEREBUS LOST HIS TEMPER.
...ABORTION BECAME RIGHT....
JUST... SITTING IN THAT CHAIR OVER THERE. SMILING.
WHAT'S-HER-NAME.... ..."ABOVE IT ALL"....
SHEP-SHEP YELLING.
CEREBUS YELLING.
TRYING TO EXPLAIN TO SHEP-SHEP AFTER
ABORTION BECAME RIGHT... BECAUSE A BUNCH OF GRUBBY-LOOKING KIDS GOT THEIR HEADS BROKEN.
...BECAUSE CEREBUS RUINED HIS SON'S MUSIC FESTIVAL.
(WHAT IS HER NAME AGAIN? CEREBUS HAS BEEN CALLING HER "NEW JOANNE" FOR SO LONG.)
(DOESN'T MATTER)
(WHAT MATTERS IS SHEP-SHEP IS COMING BACK)
(....AGAIN?....)
(AYE.)
(...AGAIN?)
ONLY THIS TIME WE'RE GOING TO PUT OUR HEADS TOGETHER AND
SIR?


UH.
SIR?
SHER-SHEP'S HERE?
ALREADY?
PARDON? OH, NO SIR-- I'M AFRAID...UH... I'M AFRAID THE SANCTUAIRE de UPPER FELDA IS MAINTAINING ITS VETO, SIR.


MAINTAINING ITS
CRINK
DIDN'T YOU THREATEN HIM?! LIKE CEREBUS TOLD YOU TO !?!
OH, YES, SIR! LOUDLY AND CLEARLY, SIR! WORD FOR WORD, SIR!
WELL?! WHAT DID HE SAY ?!?
EH-- WORD FOR WORD, SIR?
AYE! WORD FOR WORD!
IN AN UPPER FELDAN ACCENT, SIR?
AYE! IN AN UPPER FELDAN ACCENT!
HIS EXACT WORDS WERE:
"FOUR SPED ROHTAIRY ACTIZEE ON' ?"
"OOH-LA LA!"


CRINK
EEEE YULE GIT
CRINK
AND THEN...
HANG ON A SECOND...
....CEREBUS HAS TO PUKE....
CRINK
CRINK
FALSE ALARM.
YOU WERE SAYING...?


AND THEN, HE SAID THE ONLY WAY La SANCTUAIRE WOULD CONSIDER LIFTING ITS VETO WAS IF HE HIMSELF WAS ALLOWED TO BE Le PETITE CHAPERON ROUGE AT YOUR MEETING WITH YOUR SON.
"COMPRIS? ZAT I MOSS BE EEN ZE RUHM WEEZ ZAM..."
OKAY. LOSE THE ACCENT OR CEREBUS WILL THROW UP
"I MUST BE IN THE ROOM WITH THEM. AT. ALL TIMES. TO ENSURE THAT THE FATHER DOES NOT PERFORM THE-- HOW YOU SAY? SEDUCTION UPON THE SON."
"Le TAMPON EFFRAYANT (THE SCARY TAMPON) MUST NEVER GIVE BIRTH TO La MÈRE PLUS NOUVEAU! (THE NEW, IMPROVED MOTHER)""
WHY NOT?
IT SEEMS, SIR, THAT ONE OF THE BELIEFS OF La SANCTUAIRE
WAIT A MINUTE! WAIT A MINUTE! WHATEVER THIS "BELIEF" IS... IS IT GOING TO MAKE CEREBUS WANT TO PUKE?
CRINK
CRINK


UH-- ACTUALLY, SIR?
YES, I'M...I'M PRETTY SURE IT WOULD, SIR.
CRINK
GUM GUM GUM GUM
I SHOULD PROBABLY MENTION, AS WELL, SIR THAT THE uhm.... SORFGAP REPRESENTATIVE OVERHEARD MY DISCUSSIONS WITH THE UPPER FELDANS
AND IS THREATENING TO CHANGE HIS VOTE IF HE ISN'T ALLOWED TO TAKE TISSUE SAMPLES FROM ALL OF THE PARTICIPANTS.
"SORF...?
"WHAT"?
THE "SANCTUARY OF RICK, FRONTIER GENETICIST, AT PANROVY," SIR
...THE REFORM SANCTUARY WHICH SPLIT OFF FROM SORSAP...
(THE "SANCTUARY OF RICK, SCIENTIST, AT PANROVY")
...WHEN SORSAP DECLARED BOTH SOJAAP...
(THE "SANCTUARY OF JOANNE, ASTRONOMER, AT PALNU")
...AND SORPAP...
(THE "SANCTUARY OF RICK, PEDIATRICIAN, AT PANROVY")
...TO BE JOINTLY IN A STATE OF ANATHEMA: A DECISION WHICH, IT MUST BE SAID
O' TRULY?
YES, SIR?
SHUT UP A MINUTE
YES, SIR.

O'TRULY?
WHAT (RIGHT NOW) TOPS THE LIST OF "USELESS CRAP" LUXURIES THAT ALL THESE NANCY-PANTS SANCTUARIES ARE JUST ACHING TO SPEND THEIR COLLECTION PLATE MONEY ON BUT THAT THEY'RE AFRAID TO BE ACTUALLY CAUGHT OWNING -- BECAUSE THEY KNOW CEREBUS WILL HAVE THEM SKINNED ALIVE AND DIPPED IN BRINE FOR WASTING THAT KIND OF MONEY?
WELL, SIR -- YOU KNOW, YOUR GUIDELINES ON SANCTUARY DECOR BUDGETS -- PARTICULARLY THE ALLOWABLE PERCENTAGE OF SANCTUARY REVENUES WHICH CAN BE ALLOCATED TO DECOR ARE STRINGENT BUT EXTREMELY FAIR. I FEEL SAFE IN SAYING, SIR, THAT ALL OF THE SANCTUARIES ARE IN COMPLETE AGREEMENT THAT MINISTERING TO THE FAITHFUL IS OUR FIRST AND GREATEST.
O'TRULY?
YES, SIR?
IF CEREBUS WANTS SUNSHINE BLOWN UP HIS ASS, CEREBUS WILL SAY: "O'TRULY? PLEASE BLOW SOME SUNSHINE UP CEREBUS' ASS."
IF (ON THE OTHER HAND) CEREBUS ASKS YOU A SIMPLE QUESTION...
THEN ALL CEREBUS WANTS (O'TRULY) IS A SIMPLE ANSWER

YES, SIR. WELL...
I'D HAVE TO SAY THAT THAT WOULD BE A REAL "TOSS-UP," SIR -- BETWEEN THE FUSCHIA-AND-INCARNADINE-VEINED WHITE MARBLE FROM THE WESTERNMOST ESCARPMENT OF THE BUONARROTI QUARRY IN THE KOTA MOUNTAINS...
...AND BOREALAN-HIGHLAND-DEER MINE-PLATINUM BASSO RELIEVO WITH YELLOW GOLD FILIGREE AND MOTHER-OF-PEARL INTAGLIO INLAYS.
BOREALAN-HIGHLAND-DEER MINE-PLATINUM BASSO RELIEVO WITH YELLOW GOLD FILIGREE AND MOTHER-OF-PEARL INTAGLIO INLAID WHAT.
PRETTY MUCH BOREALAN-HIGHLAND-DEER-MINE-PLATINUM BASSO RELIEVO WITH YELLOW GOLD FILIGREE AND MOTHER-OF-PEARL INTAGLIO INLAID ANYTHING, SIR.
THANK YOU, O'TRULY
YOU'RE QUITE WELCOME, SIR.
SHUT UP A MINUTE, AGAIN
YES, SIR.

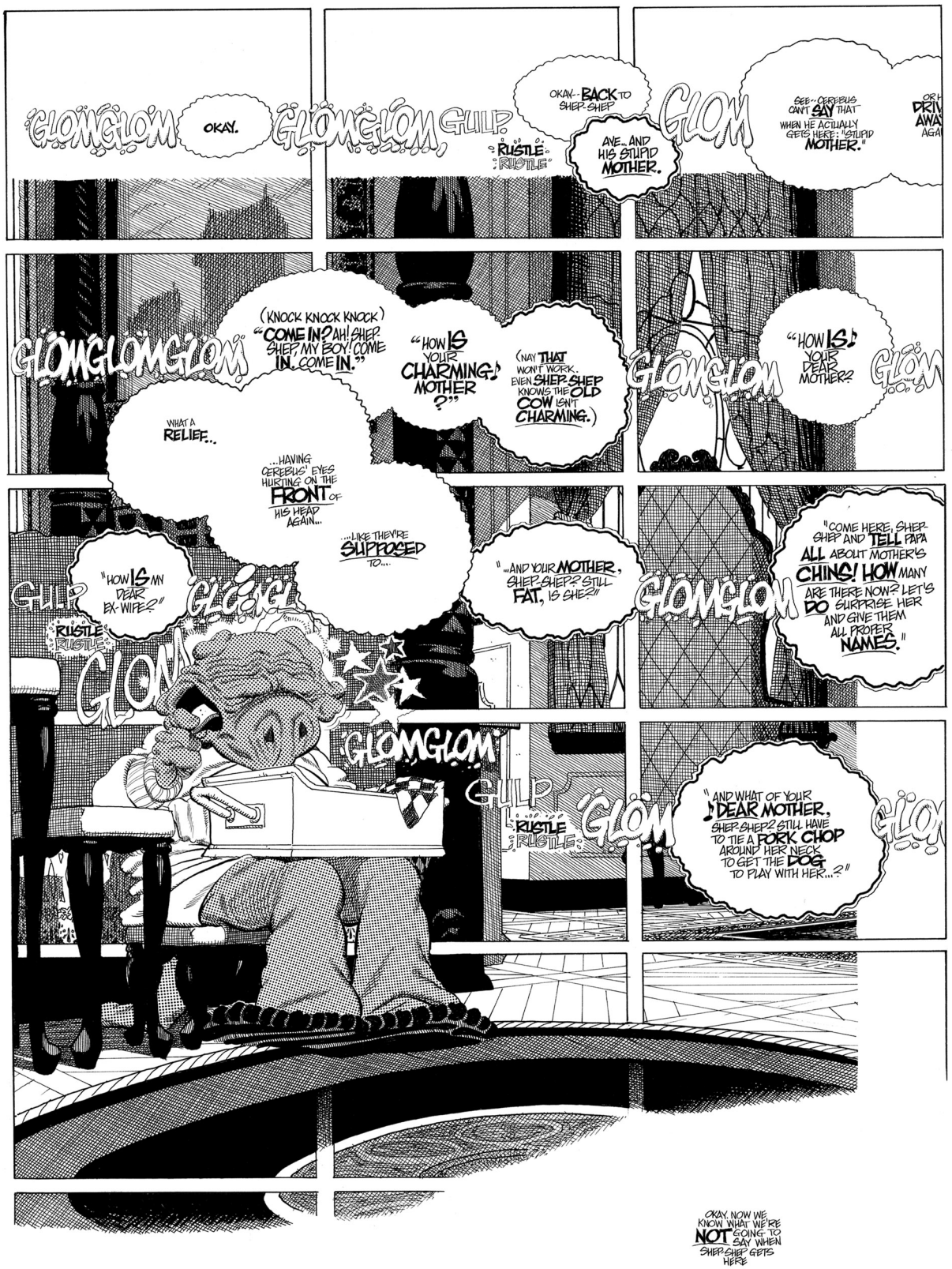
GUM GUM GUM GUM GUM GUM
ALL RIGHT. GO AND TELL THAT UPPER FELDAN FOO-FOO --QUIETLY-- THAT HE CAN RE-DO HIS ENTIRE SANCTUARY IN FUSCHIA- AND GABARDINE-VEINED WHITE MARBLE: CHOIR STALLS, NAVE, THREE-DECKER (NAY, MAKE THAT) FOUR-DECKER BOXES OF UNFINISHED (BUT MARBLE-COVERED) WOOD, PEWS, KNEELERS, BAPTISTRY, BAPTISMAL FONT, VAULTS, CRYPT, LADIES' ROOM, MEN'S ROOM, STALLS AND URINALS, FLOORS, CEILINGS, WALLS, WINDOWS, DOG HOUSE, BIRD HOUSE, BELFRY, FRONT DOORS, BACK DOORS, FRONT STEPS, BACK STEPS. HE CAN EVEN SLAP SOME ON HIS WISE FELLOWS (IF THEY'LL HOLD STILL FOR IT)
IF HE LIFTS HIS VETO ... NOW.
WOW! THAT SHOULD DO THE TRICK, SIR!
OH, AND SIR? THE KITCHEN SENT UP YOUR CHEESE TRAYS IF YOU'RE HUNGRY.
CHEESE TRAY!
Cuh-RINK
THAT'S RIGHT! HE HAS TO OPEN THE DOOR TO GIVE CEREBUS THE CHEESE TRAY.
SIR? I SAID: "THE KITCHEN. SENT UP. YOUR
OH!♪
CRINK
CRINK
OH, THE CHEESE♪ TRAY. GOOD ♪IDEA, OVERLY-- CEREBUS IS ♪STAR VING
LIMP Limp
UH. YES SIR. WELL, LET ME SEE
CRINK
LIMP LIMP LIMP LIMP LIMP LIMP Limp Limp Limp Limp Limp

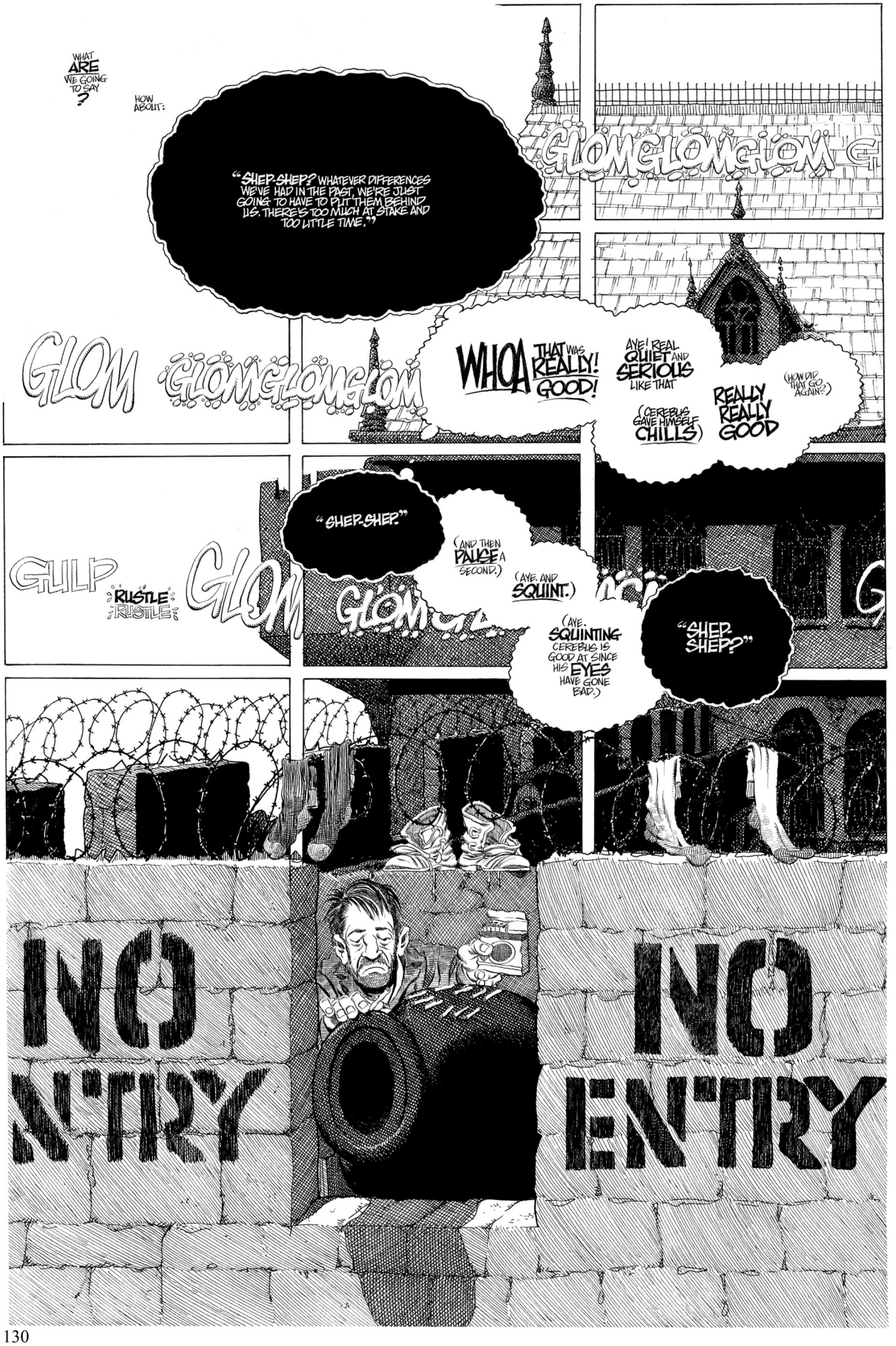
IT LOOKS LIKE YOU HAVE A CHOICE, SIR, BETWEEN THE HICKORY-SMOKED LIGHTLY AGED CHEESE THAT GIVES YOU HEARTBURN ♪ ...
OR THE STRINGY WHITE CHEESE THAT STICKS TO YOUR DENTAL WORK ♪
♪HMMMMMM
CRINK
CRINK
CRINK
ONLY ONE CHANCE TO GET THIS RIGHT.
HAVE TO BE CLOSE ENOUGH TO BLOCK THE DOOR SO HE THINKS IT'S ...STUCK... ON SOMETHING...
LIMP LIMP
limp limp
...BUT FAR ENOUGH BACK, SO WHEN HE GETS PART WAY IN...
CRINK
...CERBERUS CAN HIT HIM HARD ENOUGH WITH THE DOOR TO KNOCK HIM OUT.
CRINK
CRINK
CRINK
THE HICKORY-SMOKED, PLEASE ♪
YES, SIR ♪
KLIK
KLAK
KLONK

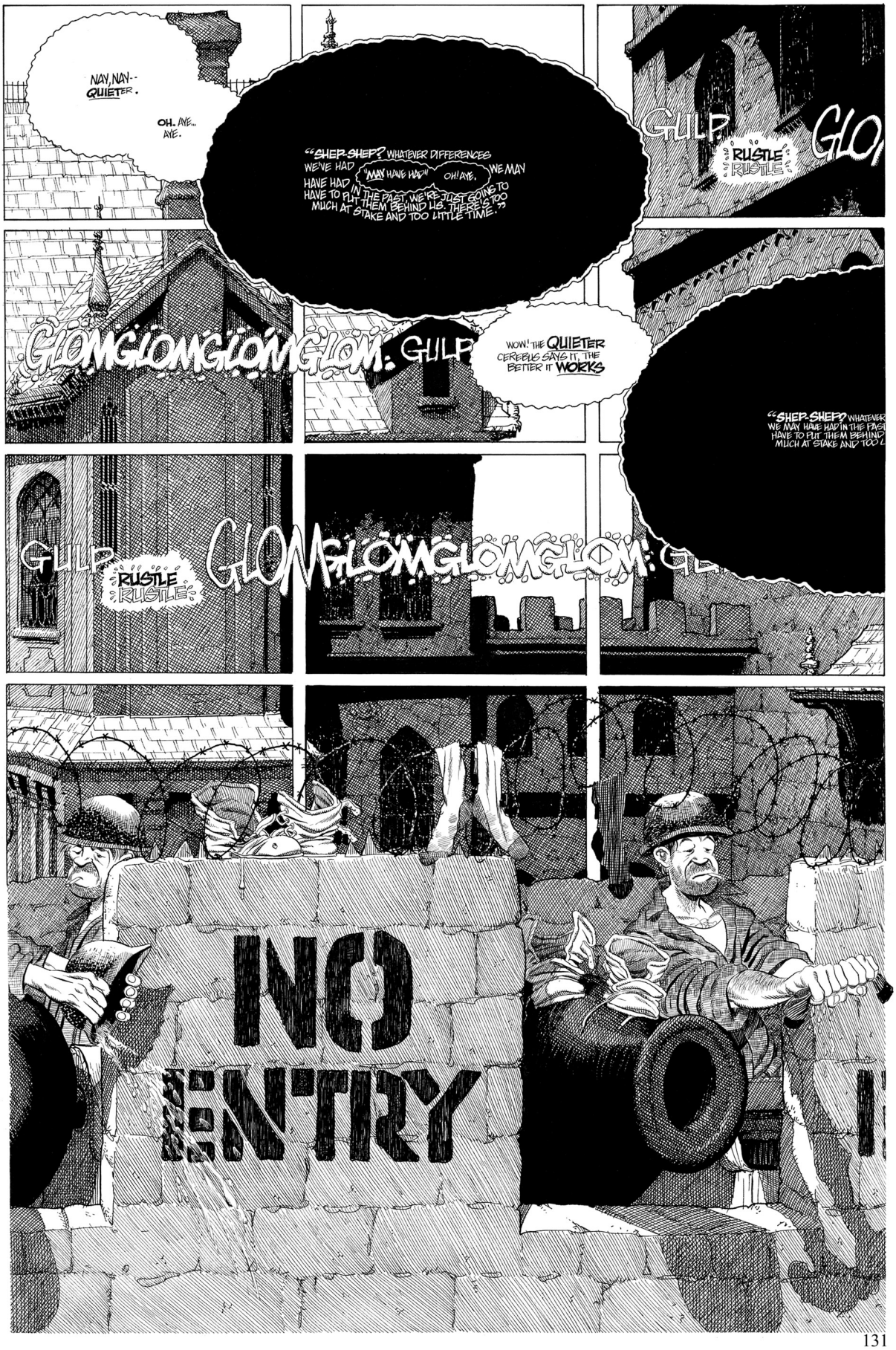
WHOMP
SORRY, SIR "
THE TRAY SEEMS TO BE "
...STUCK♪...
ON SOMETHING
Nay!
nAY!
FLUMP
CEREBUS HAS GOT IT♪
WELL uh-- BON APPETIT, SIR-- I'LL BE BACK AS SOON AS I HAVE AN ANSWER FROM THE...
"UPPER FELDA FOO-FOO"
...SAME HERE, O'FLAHRETY!
...WRITE IF YA GET WORK!
ER--? YES, SIR.
THANK YOU, SIR...
SHHHK
LIMP LIMP
Limp Limp
...OH DON'T THANK YOU O'FLAGGERTY
...THANK CEREBUS...

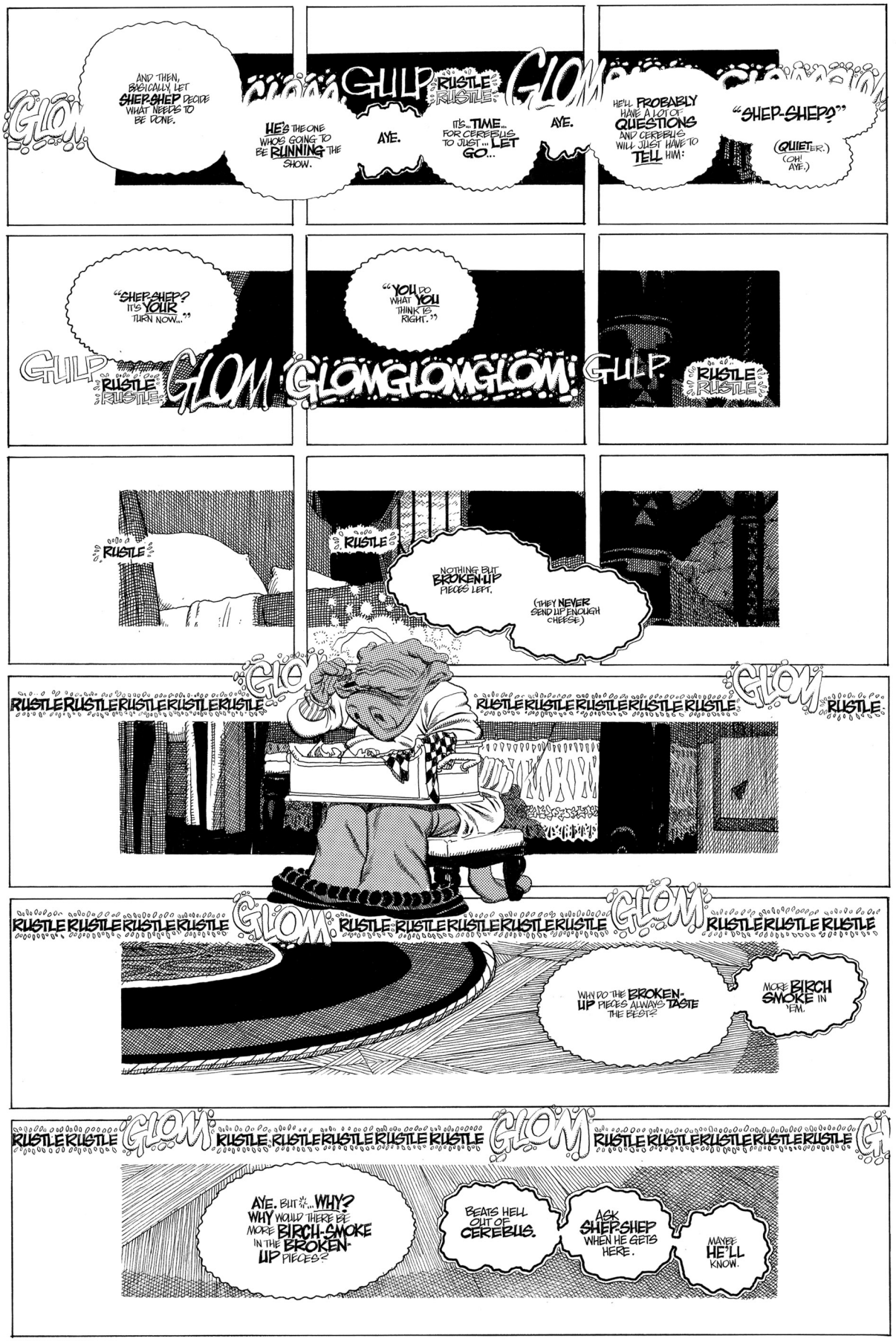
GLOM GLOM GLOM
CEREBUS! FACE HURTS.
WHY IS THAT?
GULP.
RUSTLE RUSTLE
GLOM
MUST BE... OLD AGE.
GLOM GLOM GLOM
AYE. THAT MUST BEE IT.
GLOM GLOM GLOM
THEY ALWAYS SEND UP WAY TOO MUCH CHEESE
GLOM
GULP.
RUSTLE RUSTLE
GLOM
JUST LOOK AT ALL OF IT.
GLOM
GLOM GLOM GLOM
FIVE GUYS COULDN'T EAT THIS MUCH CHEESE
GLOM GLOM GLOM
PICTURE IF CEREBUS ACTUALLY ATE ALL THIS CHEESE
GLOM
GULP.
RUSTLE RUSTLE
GLOM
CEREBUS WOULD HAVE HEARTBURN FOR A MONTH.
GLOM GLOM GLOM
SURE TASTES GOOD, THOUGH.
GLOM GLOM GLOM
WATTAYACALL BIRCH-SMOKED.
AYE. BIRCH-SMOKED
GULP.
RUSTLE RUSTLE
GLOM GLOM
WATTAYACALL CAMPFIRE TASTE.
GLOM GLOM
"EVERYTHING TASTES BETTER ON A WATTAYACALL CAMPFIRE."
GLOM
GULP.
WHAT'S HIS NAME. THE BIG GUY WITH THE BEARD USED TO ALWAYS SAY THAT
RUSTLE RUSTLE

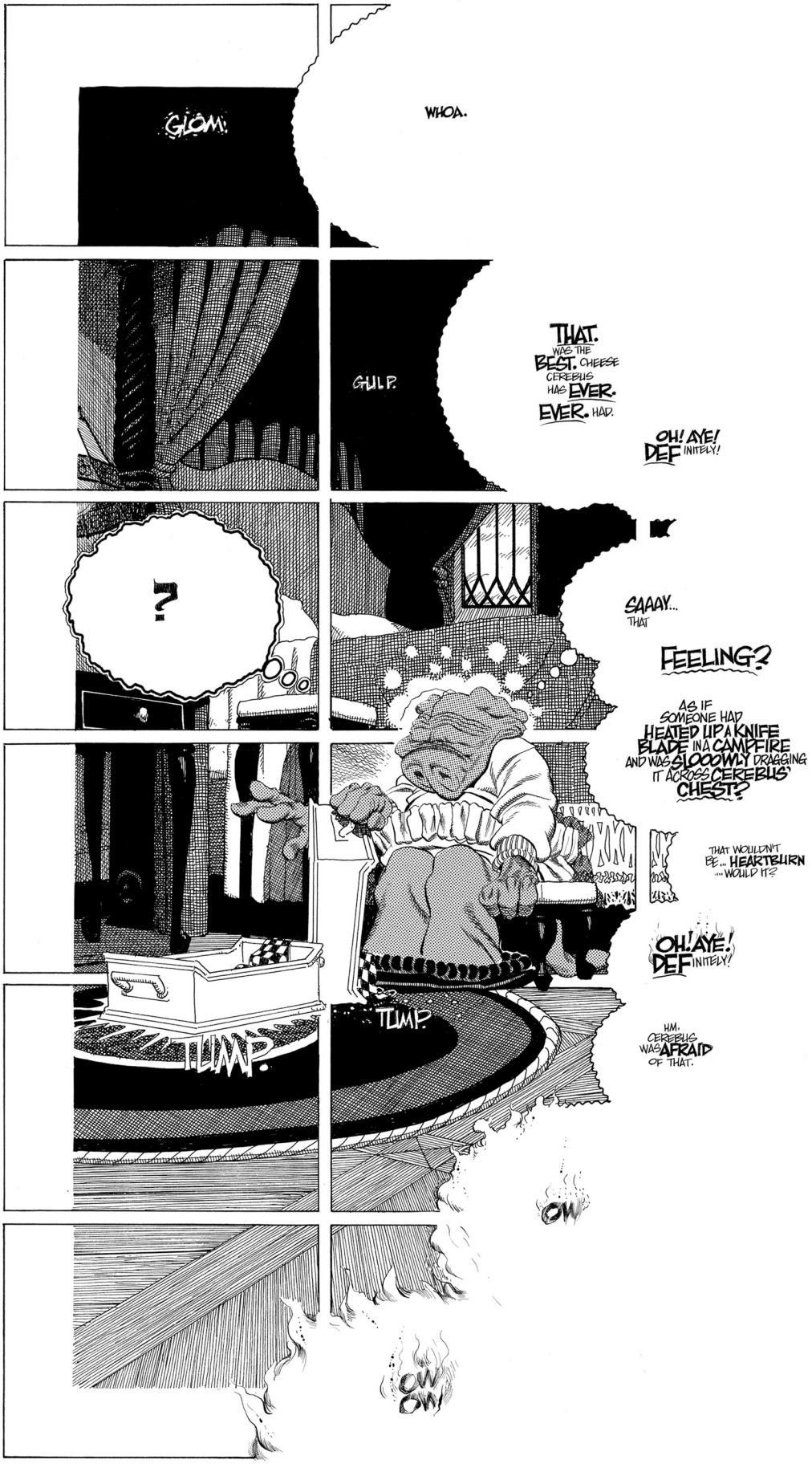
GLOM GLOM GLOM GLOM
GULP
KIK
KIK
FOOM

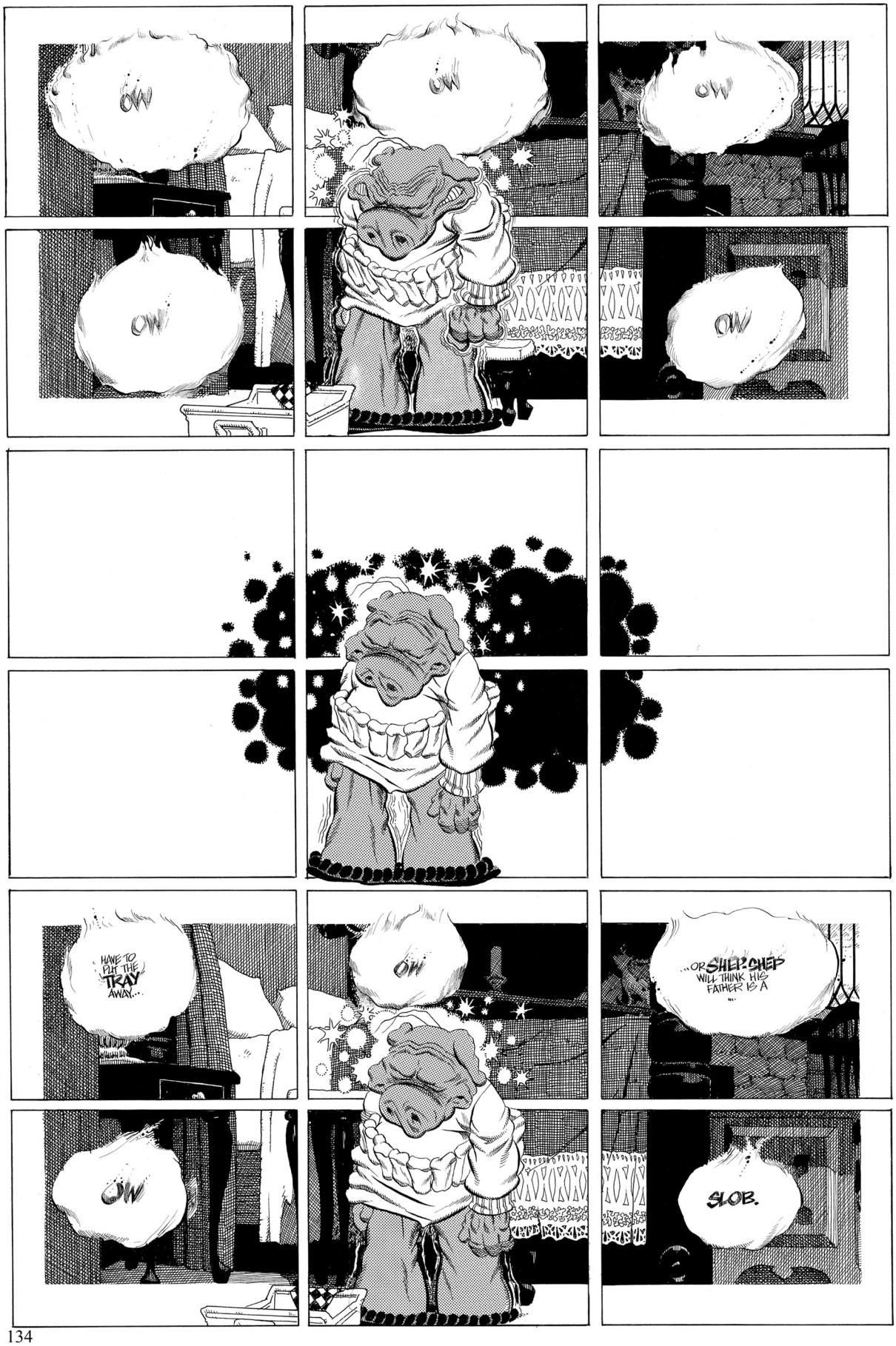

GLOMGLOM
OKAY.
GLOMGLOM, GULP
RUSTLE RUSTLE
OKAY-- BACK TO SHEP-SHEP
AYE... AND HIS STUPID MOTHER.
GLOM
SEE-- CERBERUS CAN'T SAY THAT WHEN HE ACTUALLY GETS HERE: "STUPID MOTHER."
GLOMGLOMGLOM
(KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK) "COME IN? AH! SHEP SHEP, MY BOY! COME IN. COME IN."
"HOW IS YOUR CHARMING♪ MOTHER?"
(NAY THAT WON'T WORK.. EVEN SHEP-SHEP KNOWS THE OLD COW ISN'T CHARMING.)
GLOMGLOM
"HOW IS♪ YOUR DEAR MOTHER?
GLOM
WHAT A RELIEF..
...HAVING CERBERUS' EYES HURTING ON THE FRONT OF HIS HEAD AGAIN..
...LIKE THEY'RE SUPPOSED TO...
"HOW IS MY DEAR EX-WIFE?"
GULP
GLOM
RUSTLE RUSTLE
GLOM
"...AND YOUR MOTHER, SHEP-SHEP? STILL FAT, IS SHE?!"
GLOMGLOM
"COME HERE, SHEP-SHEP AND TELL PAPA ALL ABOUT MOTHER'S CHINS! HOW MANY ARE THERE NOW? LET'S DO SURPRISE HER AND GIVE THEM ALL PROPER NAMES."
GLOMGLOM
GULP
RUSTLE RUSTLE
GLOM
"AND WHAT OF YOUR ♪DEAR MOTHER, SHEP-SHEP? STILL HAVE TO TIE A PORK CHOP AROUND HER NECK TO GET THE DOG TO PLAY WITH HER...?"
GLOM
OKAY. NOW WE KNOW WHAT WE'RE NOT GOING TO SAY WHEN SHEP-SHEP GETS HERE


WHAT ARE WE GOING TO SAY?
HOW ABOUT:
"SHEP-SHEP? WHATEVER DIFFERENCES WE'VE HAD IN THE PAST, WE'RE JUST GOING TO HAVE TO PUT THEM BEHIND US. THERE'S TOO MUCH AT STAKE AND TOO LITTLE TIME."
GLOM GLOMGLOMGLOM
GLOMGLOMGLOM
WHOA THAT WAS REALLY! GOOD!
AYE! REAL QUIET AND SERIOUS LIKE THAT
(CERBERUS GAVE HIMSELF CHILLS)
REALLY REALLY GOOD
(HOW DID THAT GO AGAIN?)
"SHER-SHEP."
(AND THEN PAUSE A SECOND.)
(AYE. AND SQUINT.)
GULP
RUSTLE RUSTLE
GLOM
GLOM
(AYE. SQUINTING CERBERUS IS GOOD AT SINCE HIS EYES HAVE GONE BAD.)
"SHER-SHEP?"
NO ENTRY
NO ENTRY


NAY, NAY-- QUIETER.
OH. AYE... AYE.
"SHEP-SHEP? WHATEVER DIFFERENCES WE'VE HAD "MAY HAVE HAD" OH! AYE. WE MAY HAVE HAD IN THE PAST WE'RE JUST GOING TO HAVE TO PUT THEM BEHIND US. THERE'S TOO MUCH AT STAKE AND TOO LITTLE TIME."
GULP
RUSTLE RUSTLE
GLO
GLOMGLOMGLOMGLOM: GULP
WOW! THE QUIETER CEREBUS SAYS IT, THE BETTER IT WORKS
"SHEP-SHEP? WHATEVER WE MAY HAVE HAD IN THE PAST HAVE TO PUT THEM BEHIND MUCH AT STAKE AND TOO L
GULP
RUSTLE RUSTLE
GLOMGLOMGLOMGLOM: GL
NO ENTRY

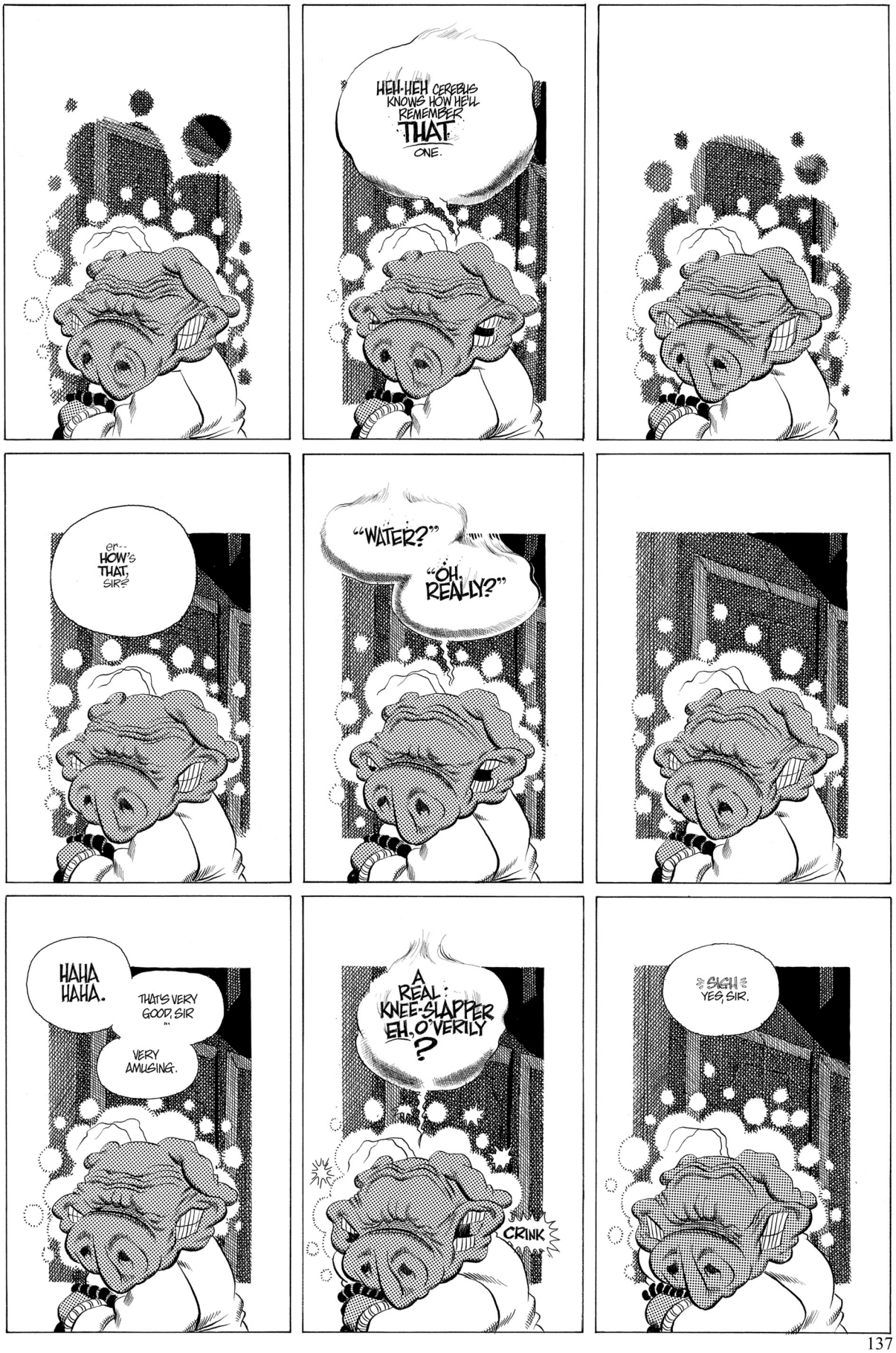

GLOM
AND THEN, BASICALLY, LET SHEP-SHEP DECIDE WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE.
HE'S THE ONE WHO'S GOING TO BE RUNNING THE SHOW.
GULP
RUSTLE RUSTLE
GLOM
AYE.
IT'S... TIME... FOR CEREBUS TO JUST... LET GO...
AYE.
HE'LL PROBABLY HAVE A LOT OF QUESTIONS AND CEREBUS WILL JUST HAVE TO TELL HIM:
"SHEP-SHEP?"
(QUIETER.)
(OH! AYE.)
"SHEP-SHEP? IT'S YOUR TURN NOW..."
"YOU DO WHAT YOU THINK IS RIGHT."
GULP
RUSTLE RUSTLE
GLOM GLOMGLOMGLOM!
GULP
RUSTLE RUSTLE
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
NOTHING BUT BROKEN-UP PIECES LEFT.
(THEY NEVER SEND UP ENOUGH CHEESE)
GLOM
RUSTLE RUSTLE RUSTLE RUSTLE RUSTLE
RUSTLE RUSTLE RUSTLE RUSTLE RUSTLE
GLOM
RUSTLE
RUSTLE RUSTLE RUSTLE RUSTLE
GLOM
RUSTLE RUSTLE RUSTLE RUSTLE RUSTLE
GLOM
RUSTLE RUSTLE RUSTLE
WHY DO THE BROKEN-UP PIECES ALWAYS TASTE THE BEST?
MORE BIRCH SMOKE IN 'EM.
RUSTLE RUSTLE
GLOM
RUSTLE RUSTLE RUSTLE RUSTLE RUSTLE
GLOM
RUSTLE RUSTLE RUSTLE RUSTLE RUSTLE
AYE. BUT... WHY? WHY WOULD THERE BE MORE BIRCH-SMOKE IN THE BROKEN-UP PIECES?
BEATS HELL OUT OF CEREBUS.
ASK SHEP-SHEP WHEN HE GETS HERE.
MAYBE HE'LL KNOW.


GLOM.
WHOA.
GULP.
THAT. WAS THE BEST. CHEESE CEREBUS HAS EVER. EVER. HAD.
OH! AYE! DEF INITELY!
?
SAAAY... THAT
FEELING?
AS IF SOMEONE HAD HEATED UP A KNIFE BLADE IN A CAMPFIRE AND WAS SLOOOWLY DRAGGING IT ACROSS CEREBUS' CHEST?
THAT WOULDN'T BE... HEARTBURN .... WOULD IT?
OH! AYE! DEF INITELY!
TUMP.
TUMP.
HM. CEREBUS WAS AFRAID OF THAT.
OW
OW OW!

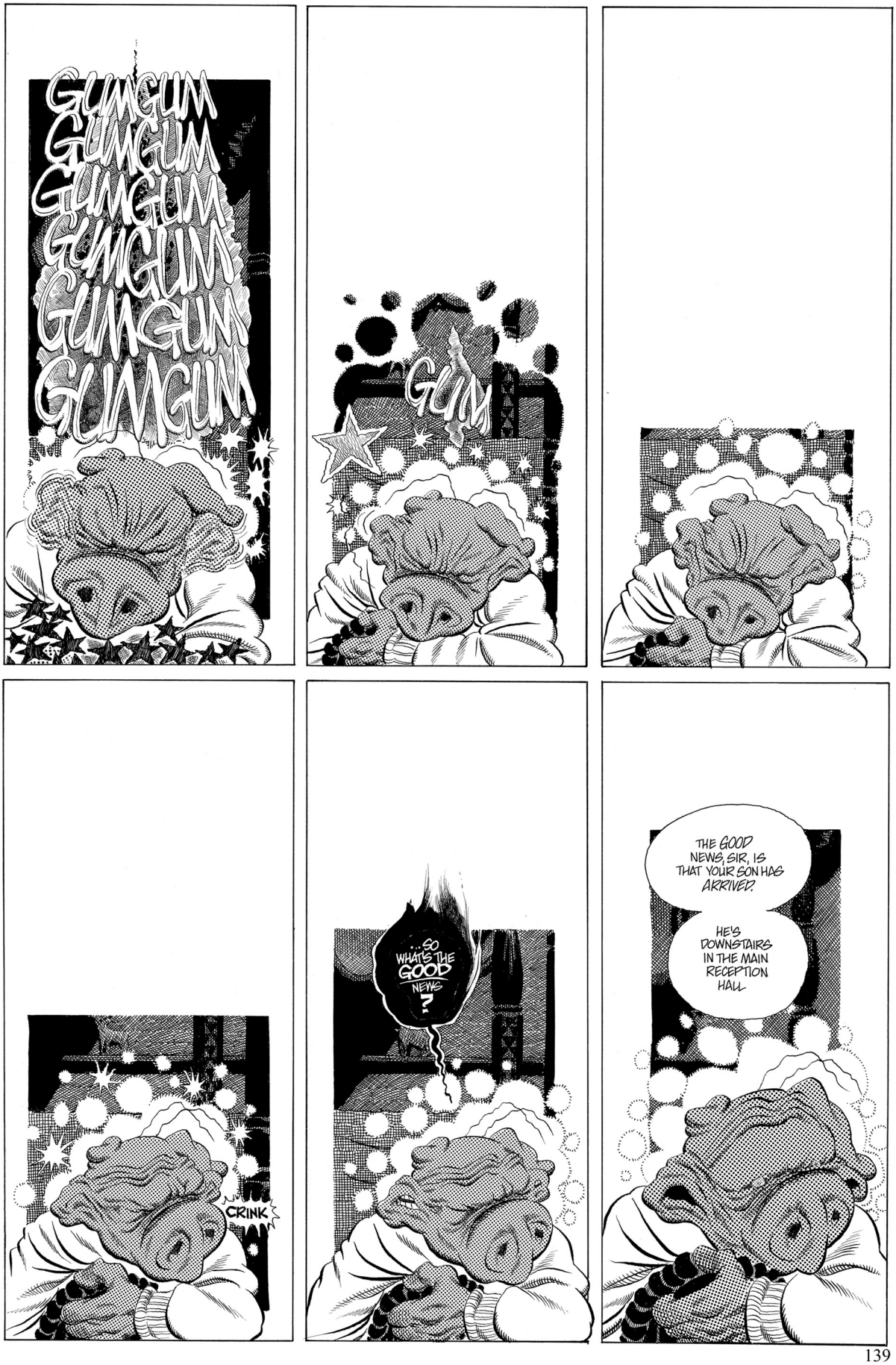

OW
OW
OW
OW
OW
HAVE TO PUT THE TRAY AWAY...
OW
...OR SHEP! SHEP WILL THINK HIS FATHER IS A
OW
SLOB.

AYE. OW AND PICK UP ALL THE
OW.
LITTLE BITS OF CHEESE WHILE CEREBELLS VS
OW.
...DOWN THERE..
PECKPECK PECKPECK
OW
GLOM
PECKPECK PECKPECK
OW
GLOM
PECKPECK PECKPECK
OW
GLOM
PECKPECK PECKPECK
UH.. THAT LAST CLUMP DIDN'T TASTE LIKE CHEESE
GLOM
PECKPECK PECKPECK
PART OF IT DID.
Limp Limp
Limp Limp
Limp Limp
Limp Limp
Limp Limp
OVERLY SHOULD BE BACK BY NOW
Limp Limp

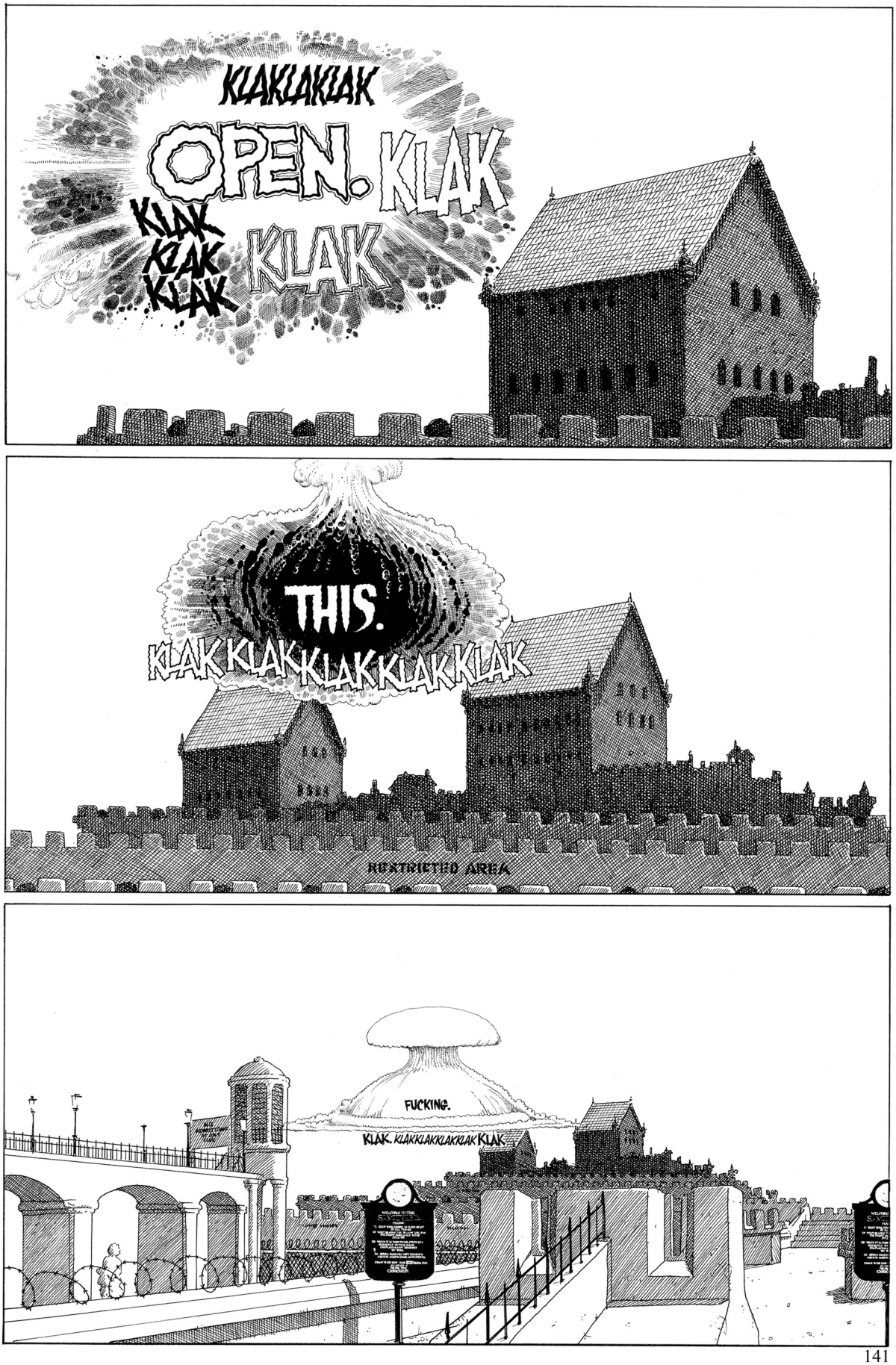
"O'VERITY" WITH AN "OW" "T"
NAY--CEREBUS IS PRETTY SURE IT'S O'VERILY WITH AN "L"
SIR?
CRINK.
SAY, THERE YOUNG FELLER! IT JUST SLIPPED CEREBUS' MIND... IS YOUR NAME "O'VERITY" WITH A "T"?
OR "O'VERILY" WITH AN "L"?
CRINK
ACTUALLY IT'S...UH... "O'REILLY," SIR.
WITH A ...UM... "WALTER"


HEH-HEH CEREBUS KNOWS HOW HE'LL REMEMBER THAT ONE.
er-- HOW'S THAT, SIR?
"WATER?"
"OH, REALLY?"
HAHA HAHA.
THAT'S VERY GOOD, SIR
VERY AMUSING.
A REAL KNEE-SLAPPER EH, O'VERILY?
CRINK
SIGH YES, SIR.

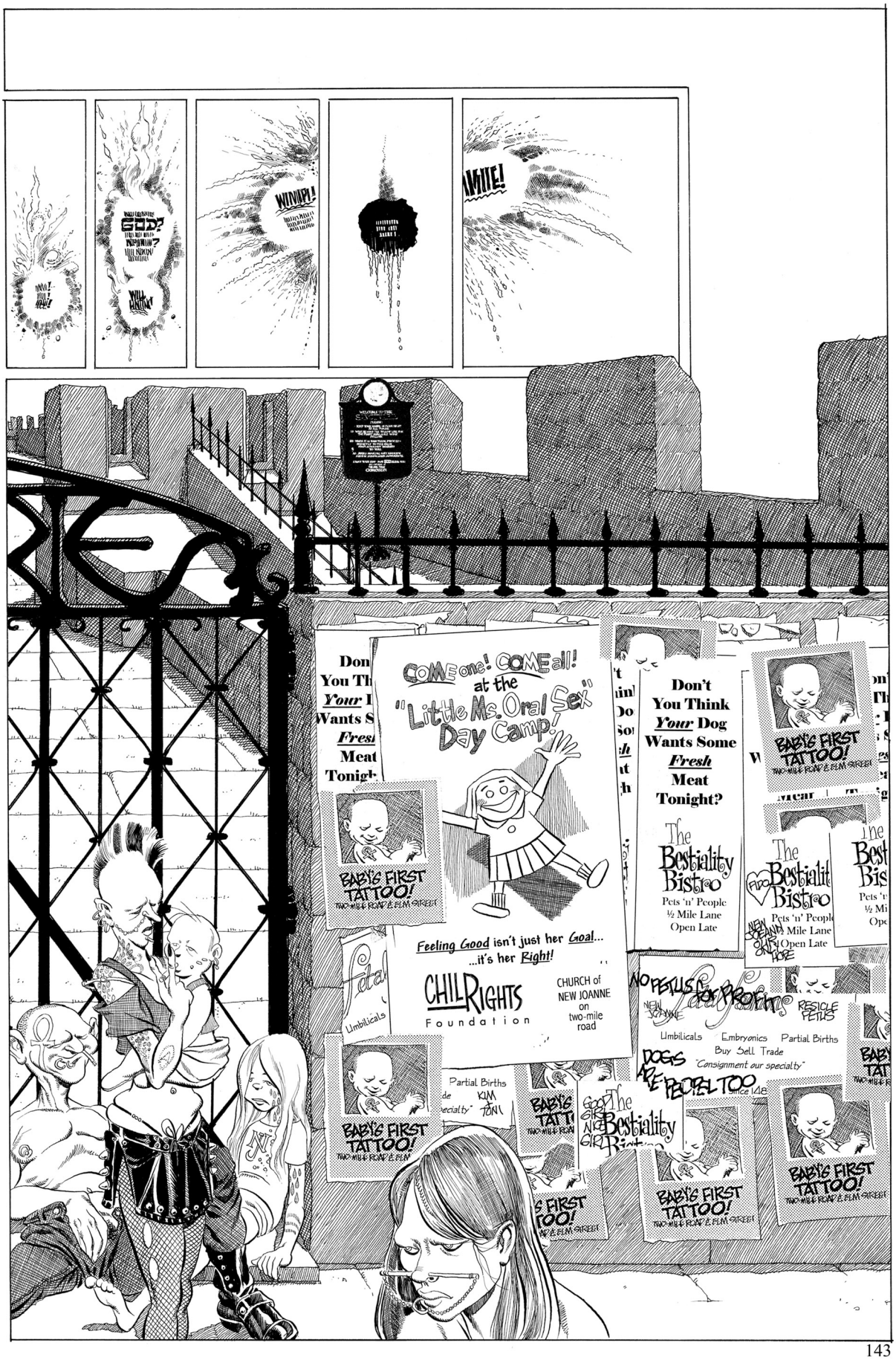
SO!
WHEN DOES SHEP SHEP GET HERE?
WHICH DO YOU WANT FIRST, SIR? THE GOOD NEWS? OR THE BAD NEWS?
GUM GUM GUNGUM
AN CRAP... GIVE CEREBUS THE BAD NEWS FIRST.
THE BAD NEWS, SIR, IS THAT THE LIPPER FELDAN ...uh... FOO-FOO REFUSES TO LIFT HIS VETO.
OW.
WHAAAAT?! DIDN'T YOU THREATEN HIM LIKE CEREBUS TOLD YOU TO?
THAT WAS LAST TIME, SIR. THIS TIME YOU TOLD ME TO BRIBE HIM.
OW.
WHAAAAT?! DIDN'T YOU BRIBE HIM LIKE CEREBUS TOLD YOU TO?
YES, SIR. AND HE'S VERY INTERESTED... BUT HE INSISTS THAT THERE MUST BE A MUTUALLY-AGREED-UPON-CHAPERONE IN THE ROOM THROUGHOUT YOUR MEETING TO ENSURE THAT YOU AND YOUR SON DON'T HAVE SEX.
FORGET IT
OW
OW

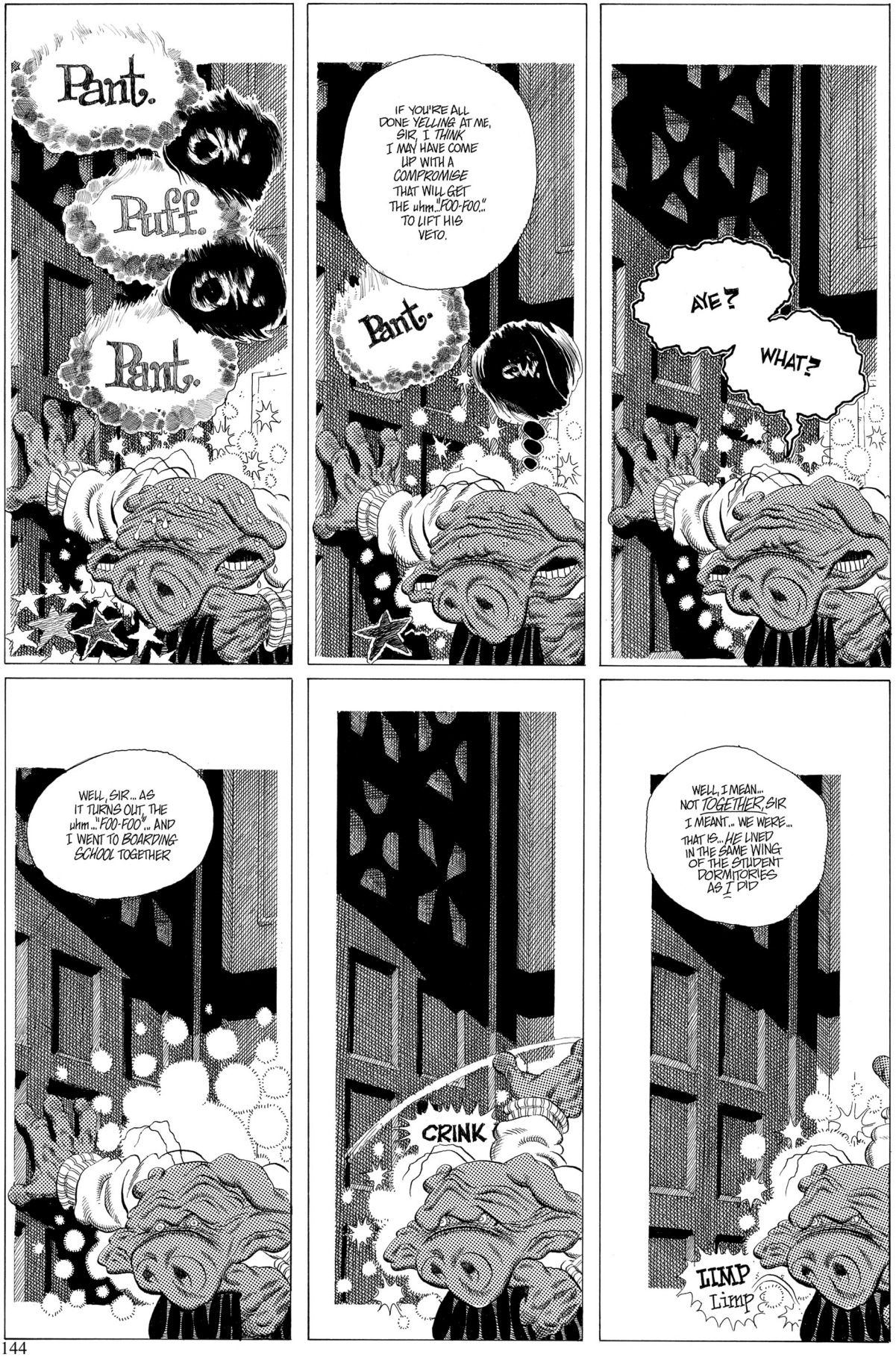

GUMGUM
GUMGUM
GUMGUM
GUMGUM
GUMGUM
GUMGUM
GUM
CRINK
...SO WHAT'S THE GOOD NEWS?
THE GOOD NEWS, SIR, IS THAT YOUR SON HAS ARRIVED.
HE'S DOWNSTAIRS IN THE MAIN RECEPTION HALL

CRINK
Limp
Limp
Limp
Limp
Limp
Limp
O'VERILY?♪
IT'S...UH O'REILLY SIR.
O'REILLY?♪
YES, SIR? ♪
OPEN. ♪
THE DOOR.
PLEASE.
KLAK.
I'M AFRAID I CAN'T DO THAT, SIR-- AS I'VE ALREADY EXPLAINED: WE'RE IN A HEIGHTENED CONDITION'ED LOCK'D-IN.
OPEN.
THE FUCKING.
DOOR.
O'REILLY.
KLAKKLAK
SIR! YOUR LANGUAGE!
O'REILLY?
THINK OF GOD, SIR! WHAT WOULD GOD SAY?!
KLAK
KLAK
KLAK

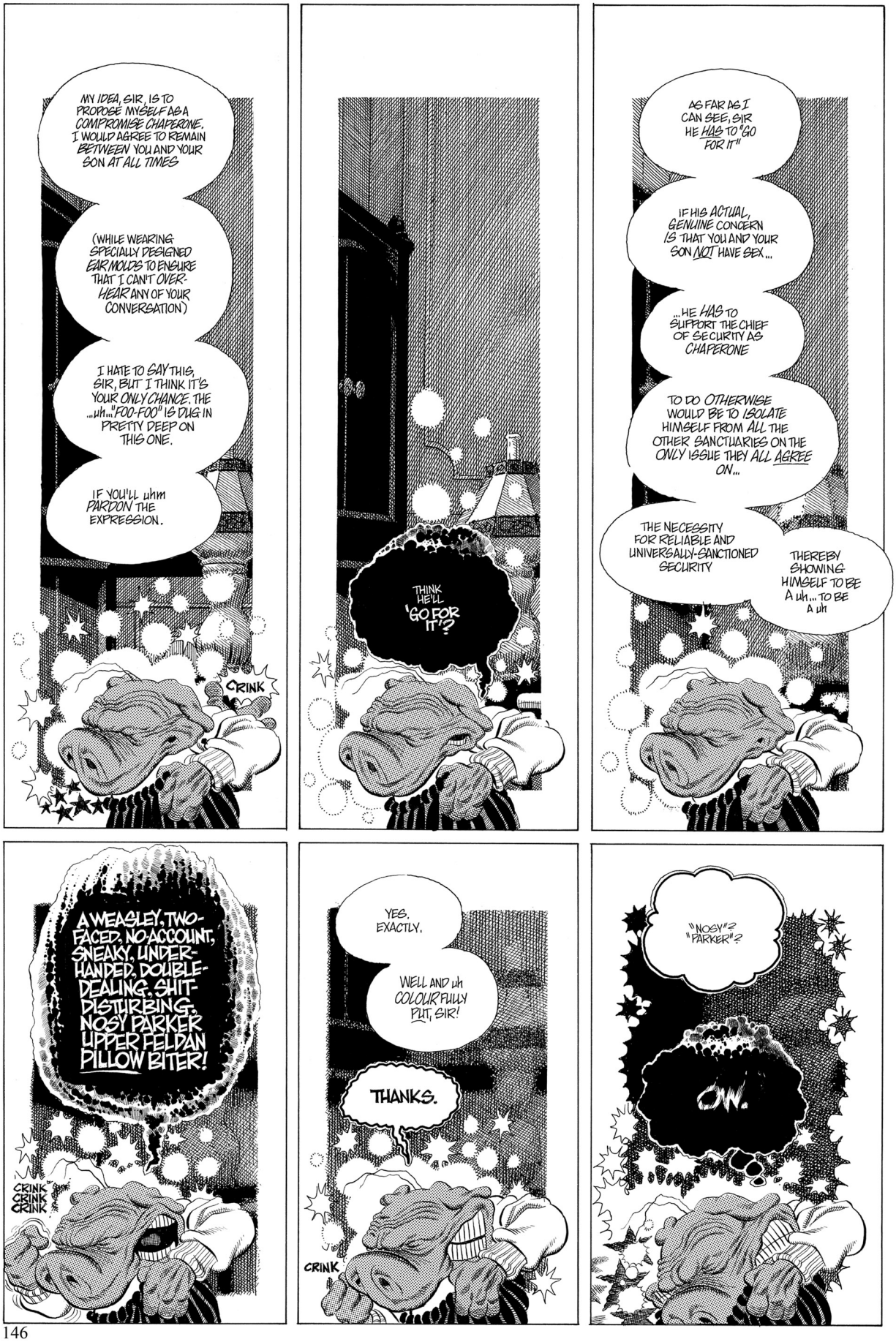

KLAKLAKLAK
OPEN. KLAK
KLAK KLAK KLAK
KLAK
THIS.
KLAK KLAK KLAK KLAK KLAK
RESTRICTED AREA
FUCKING.
KLAK. KLAKKLAKKLAKKLAK KLAK

DOOR!
KLAK KLAK KLAK KLAK KLAK KLAK KLAK KLAK KLAK
Don't You Think Your Dog Wants Some Fresh Meat Tonight?
CLOSED FOR THE DURATION OF THE
BABY'S FIRST TATTOO!
CHURCH of NEW JOANNE on two-mile road
CHILD RIGHTS Foundation
CHURCH of NEW JOANNE on two-mile road
WE'RE HUMAN BEINGS, TOO!
PEDOPHILE

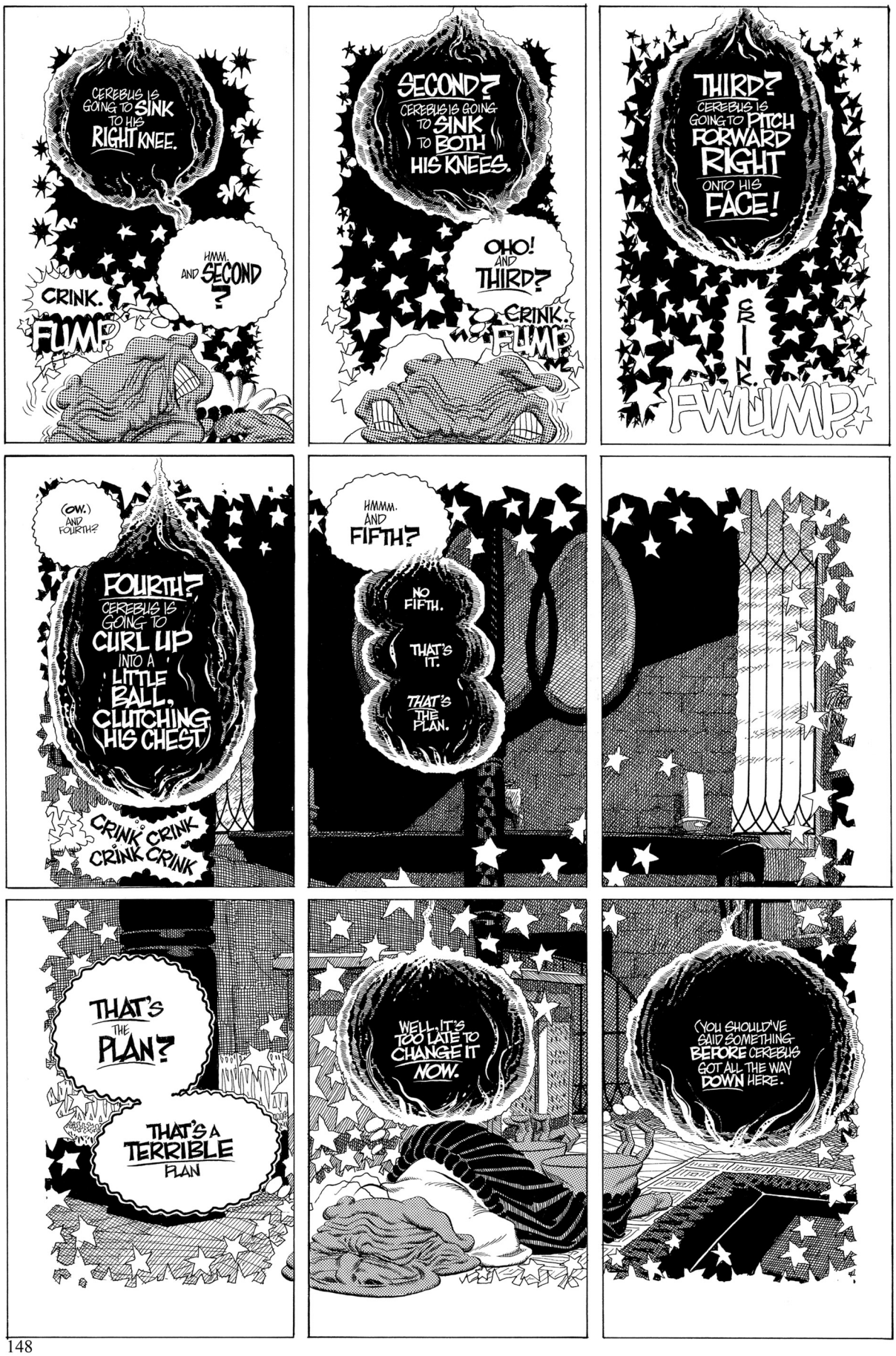

GOD?
WILL HAUNT
WIMPI!
WHITE!
COME one! COME all! at the "Little Ms. Oral Sex" Day Camp!
Feeling Good isn't just her Goal... ...it's her Right!
CHILRIGHTS Foundation
CHURCH of NEW JOANNE on two-mile road
Don't You Think Your Dog Wants Some Fresh Meat Tonight?
The Bestiality Bistro
Pets 'n' People
½ Mile Lane
Open Late
BABY'S FIRST TATTOO!
TWO-MILE ROAD & ELM STREET
Umbilicals
Embryonics
Partial Births
Buy Sell Trade
"Consignment our specialty"
DOGS ARE PEOPLE TOO
Partial Births
KIM & TONI
NEW JOANNE
RESICLE PETUS
NEW SOFANDS OUR ONLY HOPE

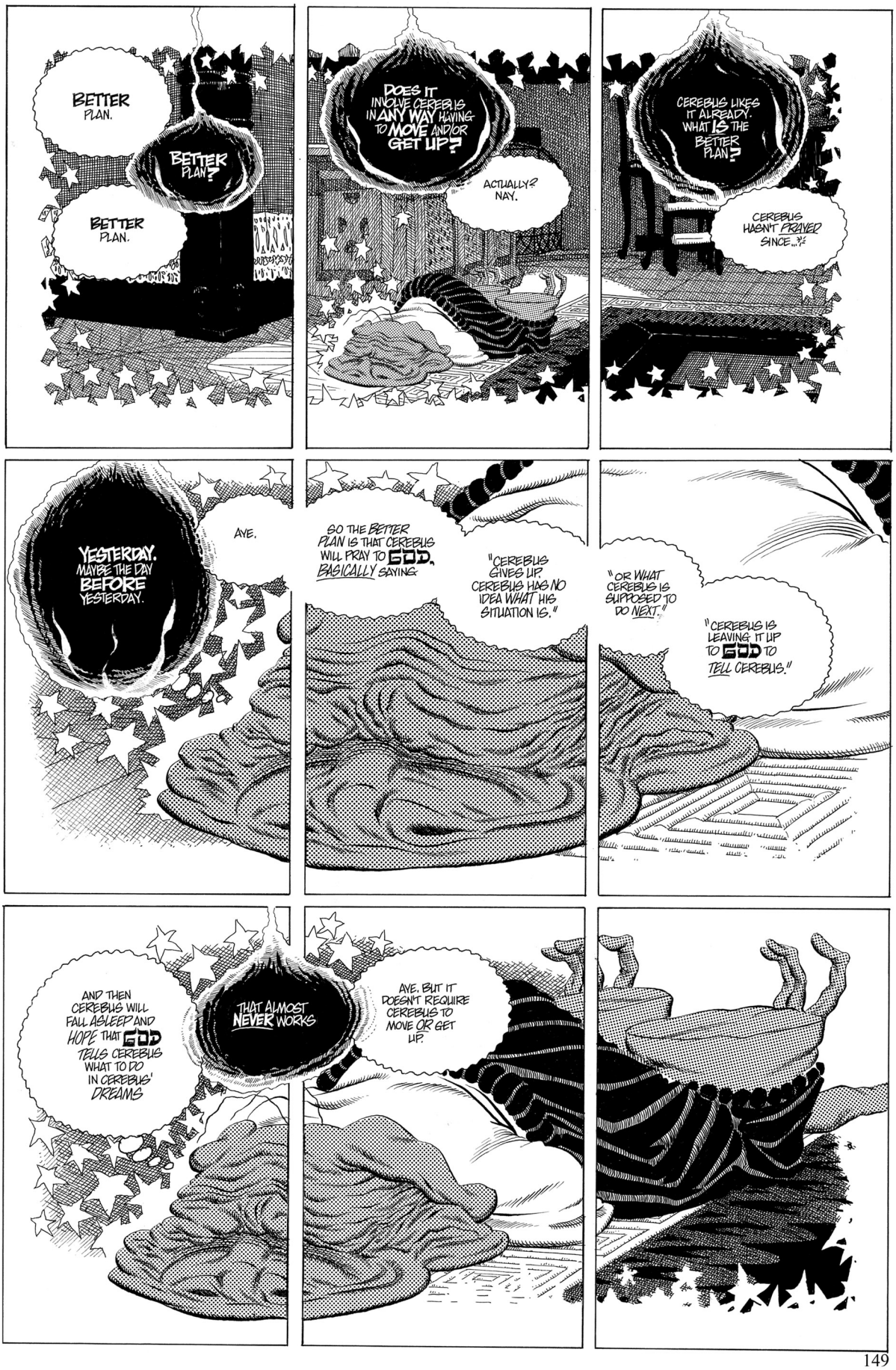

Pant.
Oh.
Puff.
Oh.
Pant.
IF YOU'RE ALL DONE YELLING AT ME, SIR, I THINK I MAY HAVE COME UP WITH A COMPROMISE THAT WILL GET THE uhm.."FOO-FOO.." TO LIFT HIS VETO.
Pant.
Oh.
AYE?
WHAT?
WELL, SIR... AS IT TURNS OUT, THE uhm.."FOO-FOO".. AND I WENT TO BOARDING SCHOOL TOGETHER
CRINK
WELL, I MEAN... NOT TOGETHER, SIR I MEANT.. WE WERE... THAT IS... HE LIVED IN THE SAME WING OF THE STUDENT DORMITORIES AS I DID
LIMP
Limp

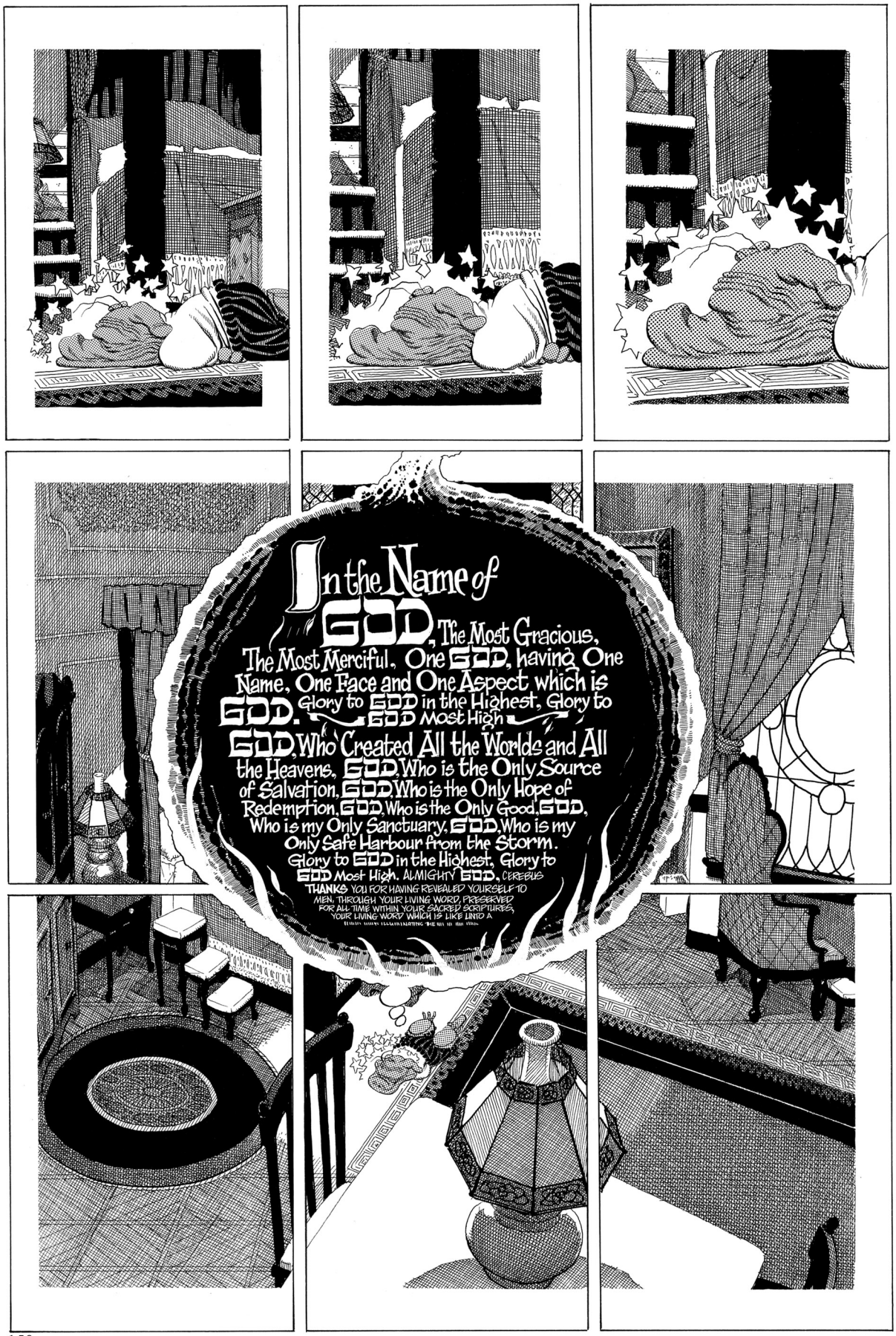
SIR, IT WASN'T THAT KIND OF BOARDING SCHOOL.
WELL... PARTS OF IT WERE, SURE.
THE GLEE CLUB CLOAKROOM FOR INSTANCE WAS AN ABSOLUTE CESS-PIT OF ¾
LIMP
Limp
THAT IS, I HEARD THAT THE GLEE CLUB CLOAKROOM WAS AN ABSOLUTE CESS-PIT OF DEPRAVITY.
STRANGE THE THINGS YOU REMEMBER FROM YOUR SCHOOL DAYS, ISN'T IT, SIR?
LIMP
Limp
LIKE ¾ LIKE THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN IGNEOUS, SEDIMENTARY AND METAMORPHIC ROCKS
HA HA. I CAN'T THINK OF ANYTHING LESS USEFUL FOR A CHIEF OF SECURITY TO REMEMBER
UNLESS IT'S THE GLEE CLUB CLOAK ¾ THAT IS WHAT HE HEARD ¾ ER. WHAT I HEARD ¾
WHAT I -- FOR SOME REASON -- REMEMBER HEARING
LIMP
Limp
SIR. DO YOU WANT TO HEAR MY SUGGESTION FOR A COMPROMISE OR NOT?
HANH?!
OH.
OH AYE.
GO AHEAD.

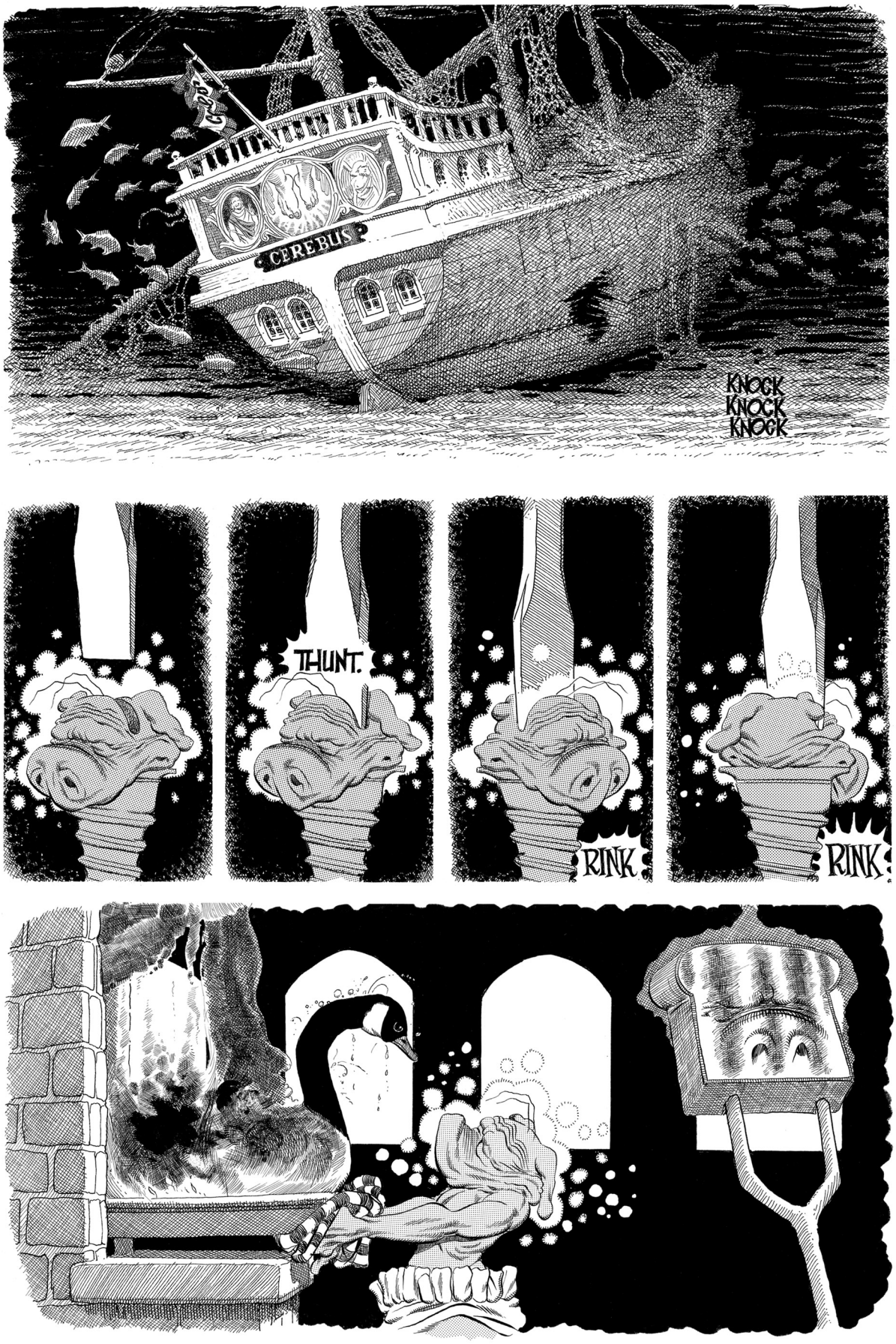

MY IDEA, SIR, IS TO PROPOSE MYSELF AS A COMPROMISE CHAPERONE. I WOULD AGREE TO REMAIN BETWEEN YOU AND YOUR SON AT ALL TIMES
(WHILE WEARING SPECIALLY DESIGNED EAR MOLDS TO ENSURE THAT I CAN'T OVER-HEAR ANY OF YOUR CONVERSATION)
I HATE TO SAY THIS, SIR, BUT I THINK IT'S YOUR ONLY CHANCE. THE ...uh..."FOO-FOO" IS DUG IN PRETTY DEEP ON THIS ONE.
IF YOU'LL uhm PARDON THE EXPRESSION.
CRINK
THINK HE'LL 'GO FOR IT'?
AS FAR AS I CAN SEE, SIR HE HAS TO "GO FOR IT"!
IF HIS ACTUAL, GENUINE CONCERN IS THAT YOU AND YOUR SON NOT HAVE SEX...
...HE HAS TO SUPPORT THE CHIEF OF SECURITY AS CHAPERONE
TO DO OTHERWISE WOULD BE TO ISOLATE HIMSELF FROM ALL THE OTHER SANCTUARIES ON THE ONLY ISSUE THEY ALL AGREE ON...
THE NECESSITY FOR RELIABLE AND UNIVERSALLY-SANCTIONED SECURITY
THEREBY SHOWING HIMSELF TO BE A uh... TO BE A uh
A WEASLEY, TWO-FACED, NO-ACCOUNT, SNEAKY, UNDER-HANDED, DOUBLE-DEALING, SHIT-DISTURBING, NOSY PARKER UPPER FELDAN PILLOW BITER!
CRINK CRINK CRINK
YES, EXACTLY.
WELL AND uh COLOUR FULLY PUT, SIR!
THANKS.
CRINK
"NOSY"? "PARKER"?
OW.

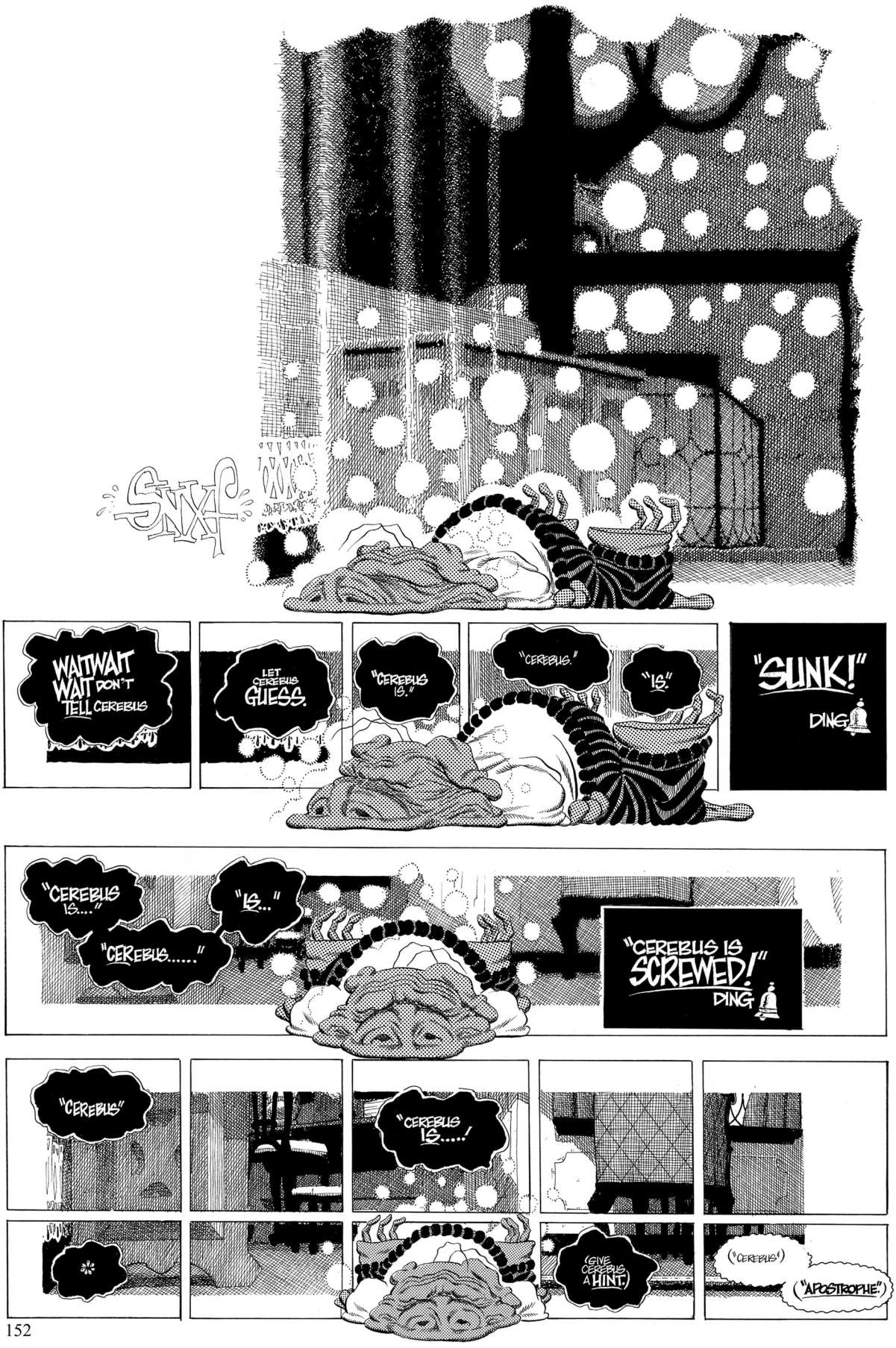
NGGH
ER- IS ANYTHING WRONG, SIR?
SOUNDS SO... FAR AWAY.
NAY. CEREBUS WAS JUST...
STRETCHING.
VERY GOOD, SIR. SO- I HAVE YOUR AUTHORIZATION TO PROPOSE MYSELF AS A COMPROMISE CHAPERONE?
EH? OH. AYE. AYE.
VERY GOOD, SIR. I'LL STOP BY MY APARTMENTS TO PICK UP MY EAR MOLDS, GET THE uhm "FOO-FOO" TO "SIGN OFF" ON THE COMPROMISE AND
GOD WILLING
I'LL BE BACK HERE WITH YOUR SON WITHIN THE HOUR.
OW! THIS IS THE WORST HEARTBURN CEREBUS HAS EVER HAD
FORGET THE HEARTBURN! DIDN'T CEREBUS HEAR WHAT O'TRULY JUST SAID? HE'S GOING TO BE BACK WITH SHEP! SHEP WITHIN THE HOUR!
CEREBUS NEEDS A PLAN!
A PLAN.
AYE!
HMM. A PLAN. WAIT A MINUTE. CEREBUS HAS THE PERFECT PLAN.
WHAT'S THAT?
FIRST?

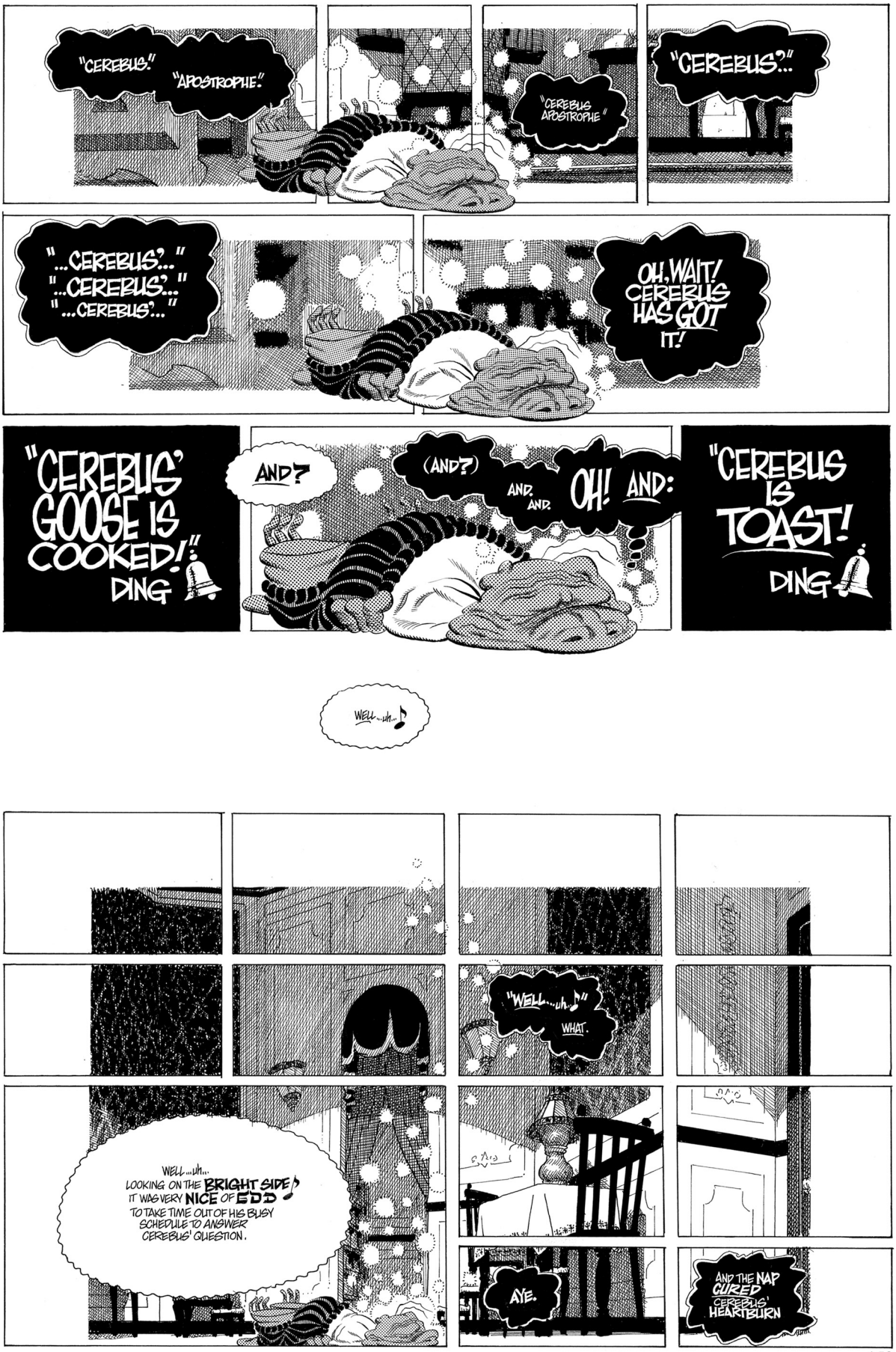

CEREBUS IS GOING TO SINK TO HIS RIGHT KNEE.
HMM. AND SECOND?
CRINK.
FLUMP.
SECOND? CEREBUS IS GOING TO SINK TO BOTH HIS KNEES.
OHO! AND THIRD?
CRINK.
FLUMP.
THIRD? CEREBUS IS GOING TO PITCH FORWARD RIGHT ONTO HIS FACE!
CRINK.
FWUMP.
(OW.) AND FOURTH?
FOURTH? CEREBUS IS GOING TO CURL UP INTO A LITTLE BALL, CLUTCHING HIS CHEST
CRINK CRINK CRINK CRINK
HMMM. AND FIFTH?
NO FIFTH.
THAT'S IT.
THAT'S THE PLAN.
THAT'S THE PLAN?
THAT'S A TERRIBLE PLAN
WELL, IT'S TOO LATE TO CHANGE IT NOW.
(YOU SHOULD'VE SAID SOMETHING BEFORE CEREBUS GOT ALL THE WAY DOWN HERE.

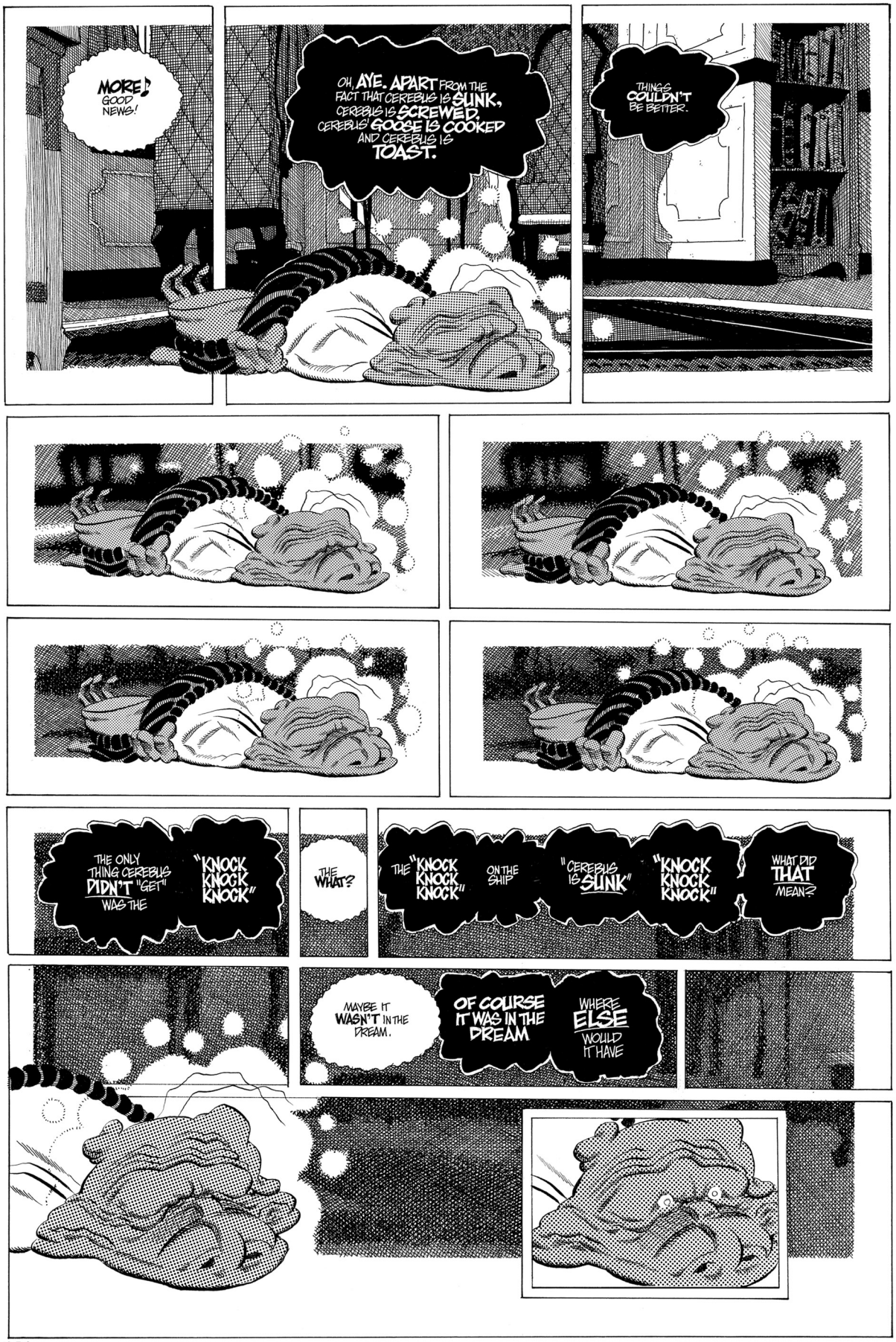

BETTER PLAN.
BETTER PLAN?
BETTER PLAN.
DOES IT INVOLVE CEREBUS IN ANY WAY HAVING TO MOVE AND/OR GET UP?
ACTUALLY? NAY.
CEREBUS LIKES IT ALREADY. WHAT IS THE BETTER PLAN?
CEREBUS HASN'T PRAYED SINCE...
YESTERDAY. MAYBE THE DAY BEFORE YESTERDAY.
AYE.
SO THE BETTER PLAN IS THAT CEREBUS WILL PRAY TO GOD, BASICALLY SAYING:
"CEREBUS GIVES UP. CEREBUS HAS NO IDEA WHAT HIS SITUATION IS."
"OR WHAT CEREBUS IS SUPPOSED TO DO NEXT."
"CEREBUS IS LEAVING IT UP TO GOD TO TELL CEREBUS."
AND THEN CEREBUS WILL FALL ASLEEP AND HOPE THAT GOD TELLS CEREBUS WHAT TO DO IN CEREBUS' DREAMS
THAT ALMOST NEVER WORKS
AYE, BUT IT DOESN'T REQUIRE CEREBUS TO MOVE OR GET UP.

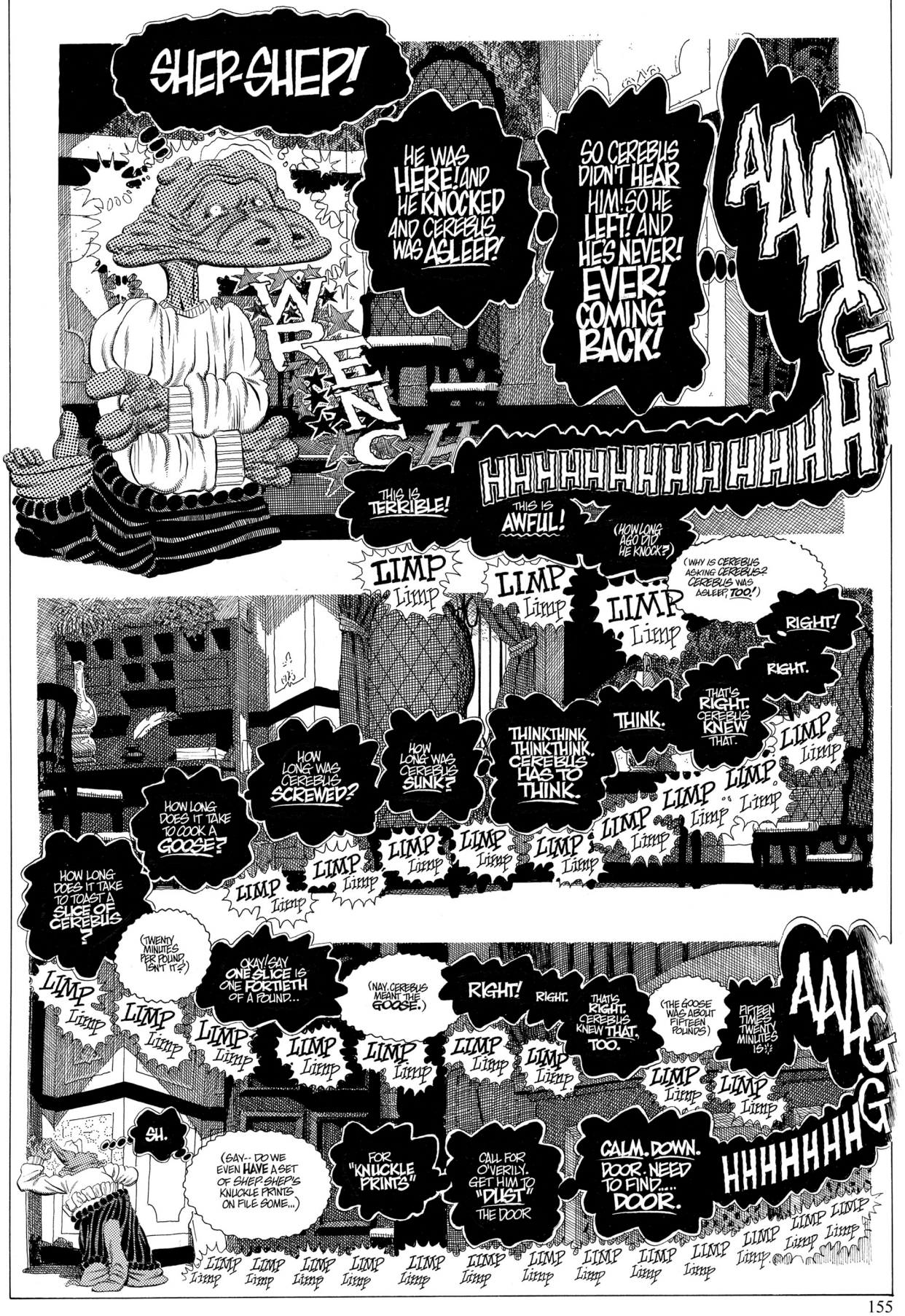

In the Name of GOD, The Most Gracious, The Most Merciful. One GOD, having One Name, One Face and One Aspect which is GOD. Glory to GOD in the Highest, Glory to GOD Most High
GOD, Who Created All the Worlds and All the Heavens. GOD, Who is the Only Source of Salvation, GOD, Who is the Only Hope of Redemption, GOD, Who is the Only Good, GOD, Who is my Only Sanctuary, GOD, Who is my Only Safe Harbour from the Storm. Glory to GOD in the Highest, Glory to GOD Most High. ALMIGHTY GOD, CEREBUS
THANKS YOU FOR HAVING REVEALED YOURSELF TO MEN, THROUGH YOUR LIVING WORD, PRESERVED FOR ALL TIME WITHIN YOUR SACRED SCRIPTURES, YOUR LIVING WORD, WHICH IS LIKE UNTO A

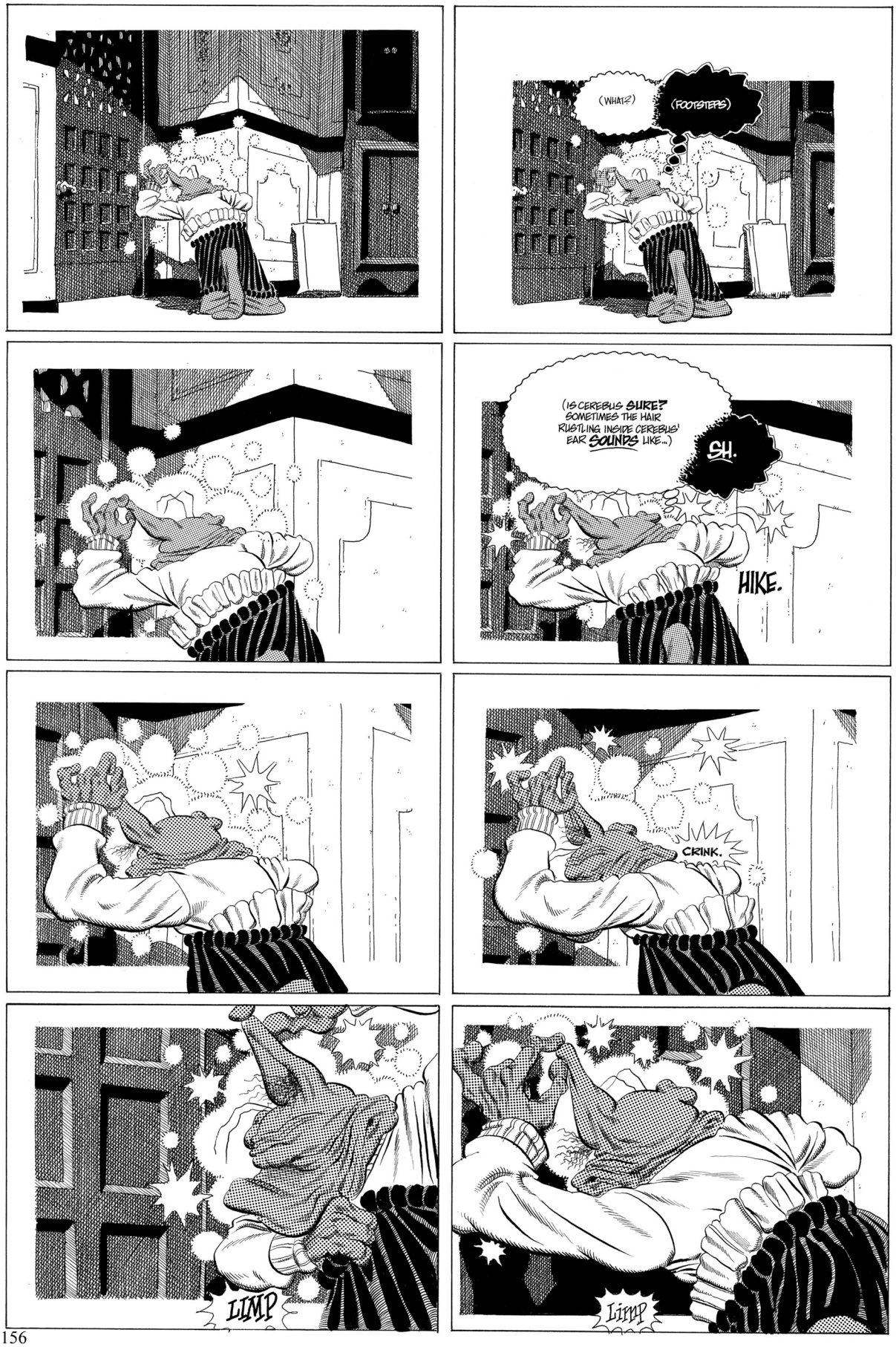

CEREBUS
KNOCK
KNOCK
KNOCK
THUNT.
RINK
RINK


WAIT WAIT WAIT DON'T TELL CEREBUS
LET CEREBUS GUESS.
"CEREBUS IS."
"CEREBUS."
"IS."
"SUNK!"
DING
"CEREBUS IS..."
"IS..."
"CEREBUS....."
"CEREBUS IS SCREWED!"
DING
"CEREBUS"
"CEREBUS IS....!"
(GIVE CEREBUS A HINT.)
("CEREBUS')
("APOSTROPHE")

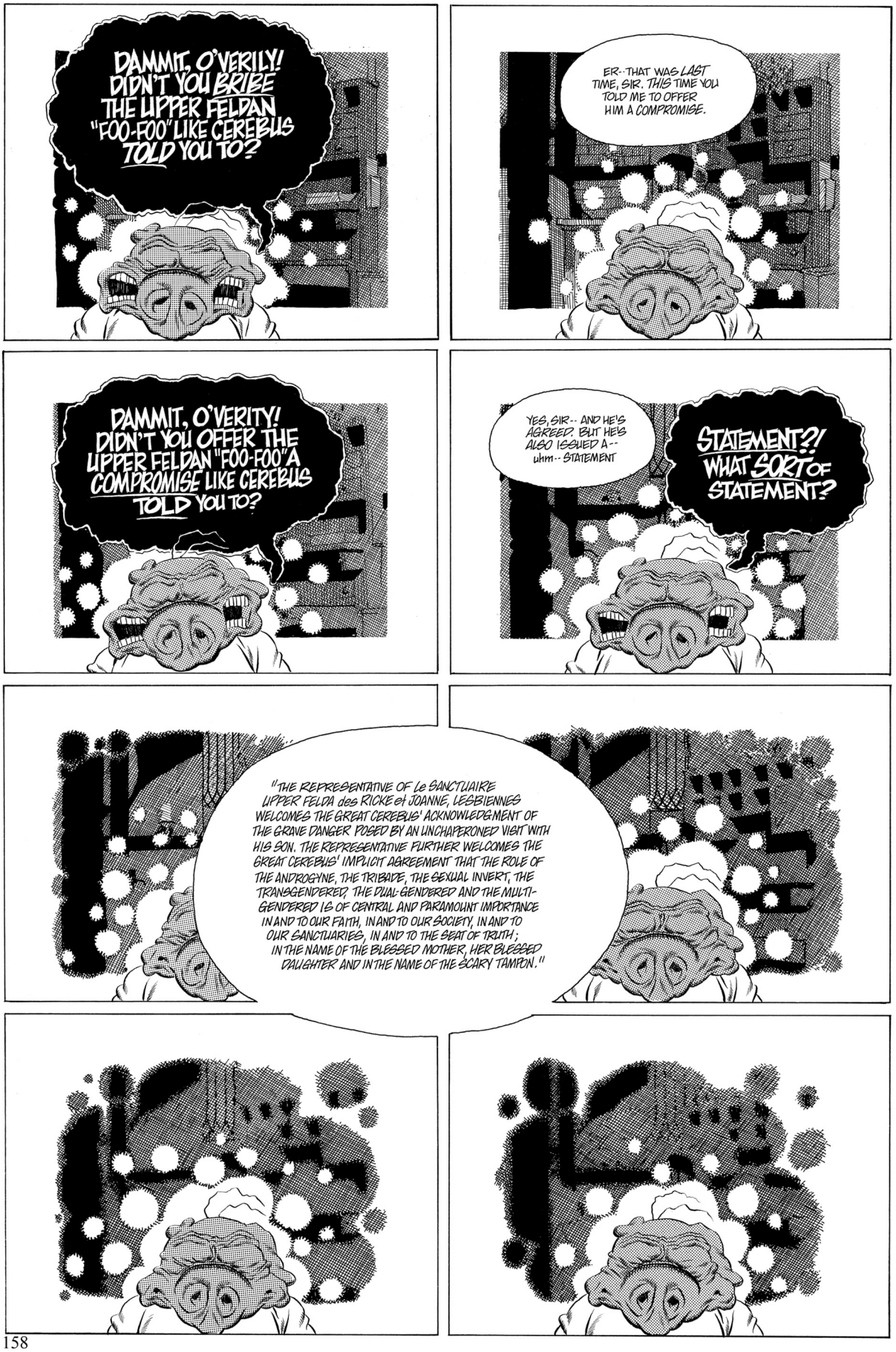

"CEREBUS."
"APOSTROPHE."
"CEREBUS APOSTROPHE"
"CEREBUS'..."
"...CEREBUS'..."
"...CEREBUS'..."
"...CEREBUS'..."
OH, WAIT! CEREBUS HAS GOT IT!
"CEREBUS' GOOSE IS COOKED!" DING
AND?
(AND?)
AND. AND.
OH! AND:
"CEREBUS IS TOAST!" DING
WELL...UH...♪
"WELL...UH...♪"
WHAT.
WELL...UH... LOOKING ON THE BRIGHT SIDE♪ IT WAS VERY NICE OF EDD TO TAKE TIME OUT OF HIS BUSY SCHEDULE TO ANSWER CEREBUS' QUESTION.
AYE.
AND THE NAP CURED CEREBUS' HEARTBURN

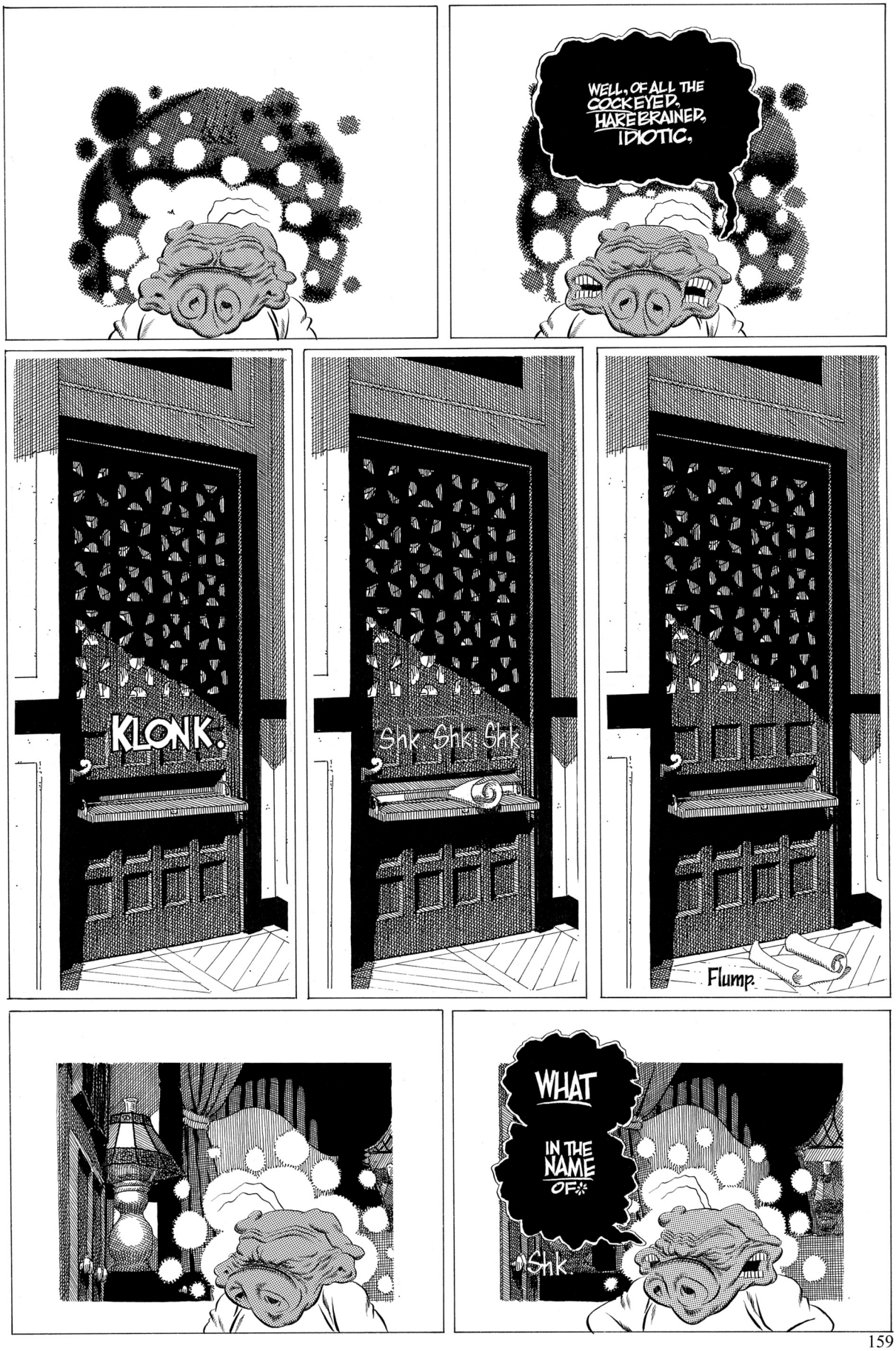

MORE! GOOD NEWS!
OH, AYE. APART FROM THE FACT THAT CEREBUS IS SUNK, CEREBUS IS SCREWED, CEREBUS' GOOSE IS COOKED AND CEREBUS IS TOAST.
THINGS COULDN'T BE BETTER.
THE ONLY THING CEREBUS DIDN'T "GET" WAS THE "KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK"
THE WHAT?
THE "KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK" ON THE SHIP "CEREBUS IS SUNK" "KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK"
WHAT DID THAT MEAN?
MAYBE IT WASN'T IN THE DREAM.
OF COURSE IT WAS IN THE DREAM
WHERE ELSE WOULD IT HAVE

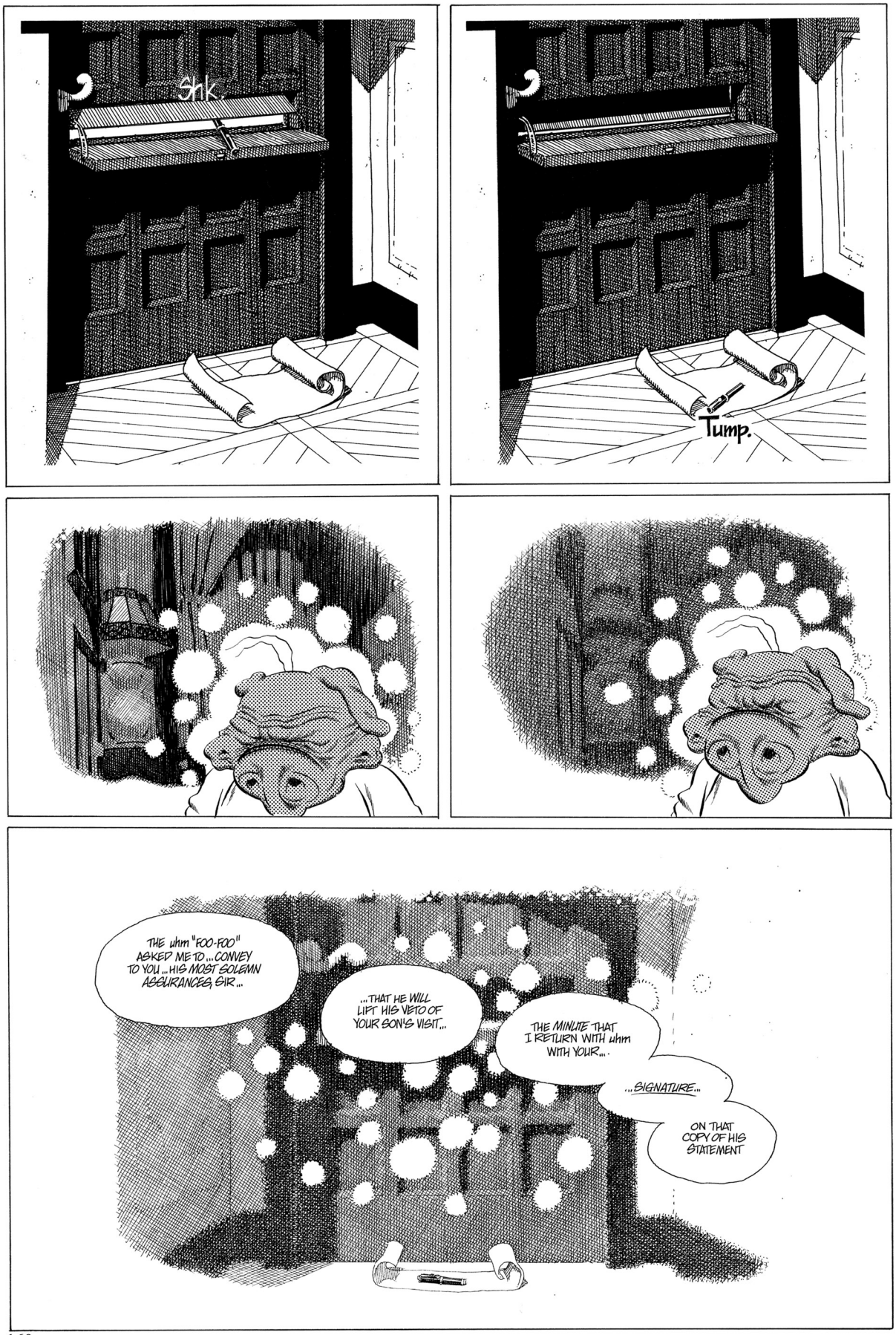

SHEP-SHEP!
HE WAS HERE! AND HE KNOCKED AND CEREBUS WAS ASLEEP!
SO CEREBUS DIDN'T HEAR HIM! SO HE LEFT! AND HE'S NEVER! EVER! COMING BACK!
AAAGGH
WRENCH
HHHHHHHHHHHHHH
THIS IS TERRIBLE!
THIS IS AWFUL!
(HOW LONG AGO DID HE KNOCK?)
(WHY IS CEREBUS ASKING CEREBUS? CEREBUS WAS ASLEEP, TOO!)
LIMP
RIGHT!
RIGHT.
THAT'S RIGHT. CEREBUS KNEW THAT.
THINK.
THINKTHINK THINKTHINK. CEREBUS HAS TO THINK.
HOW LONG WAS CEREBUS SCREWED?
HOW LONG WAS CEREBUS SUNK?
HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO COOK A GOOSE?
HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO TOAST A SLICE OF CEREBUS?
(TWENTY MINUTES PER POUND, ISN'T IT?)
OKAY! SAY ONE SLICE IS ONE FORTIETH OF A POUND...
(NAY. CEREBUS MEANT THE GOOSE.)
RIGHT!
RIGHT.
THAT'S RIGHT. CEREBUS KNEW THAT, TOO.
(THE GOOSE WAS ABOUT FIFTEEN POUNDS)
FIFTEEN TIMES TWENTY MINUTES IS...
AAAGGH
SH.
(SAY-- DO WE EVEN HAVE A SET OF SHEP SHEP'S KNUCKLE PRINTS ON FILE SOME...)
FOR "KNUCKLE PRINTS"
CALL FOR O'VERILY. GET HIM TO "DUST" THE DOOR
CALM. DOWN. DOOR. NEED TO FIND.... DOOR.
HHHHHHHG

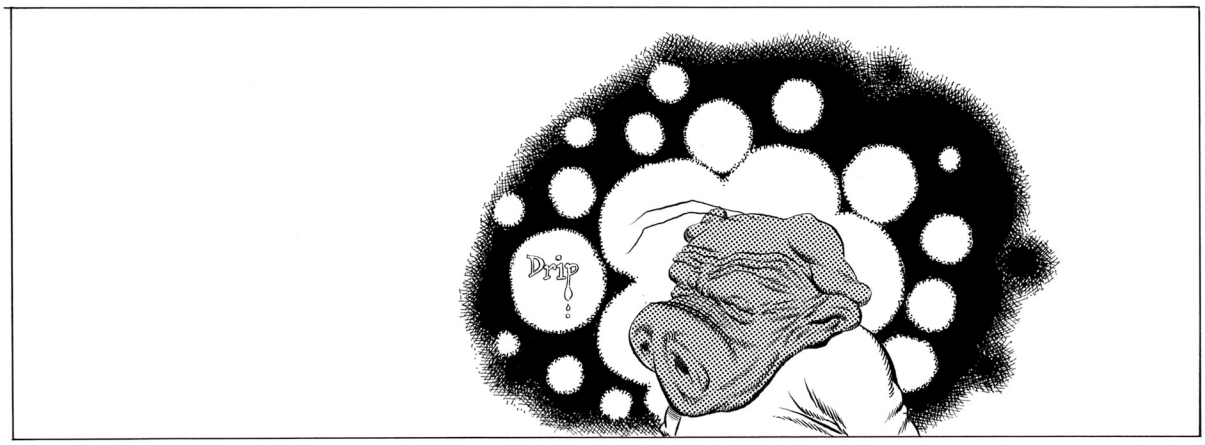

(WHAT?)
(FOOTSTEPS)
(IS CEREBUS SURE? SOMETIMES THE HAIR RUSTLING INSIDE CEREBUS' EAR SOUNDS LIKE...)
SH.
HIKE.
CRINK.
LIMP
LIMP

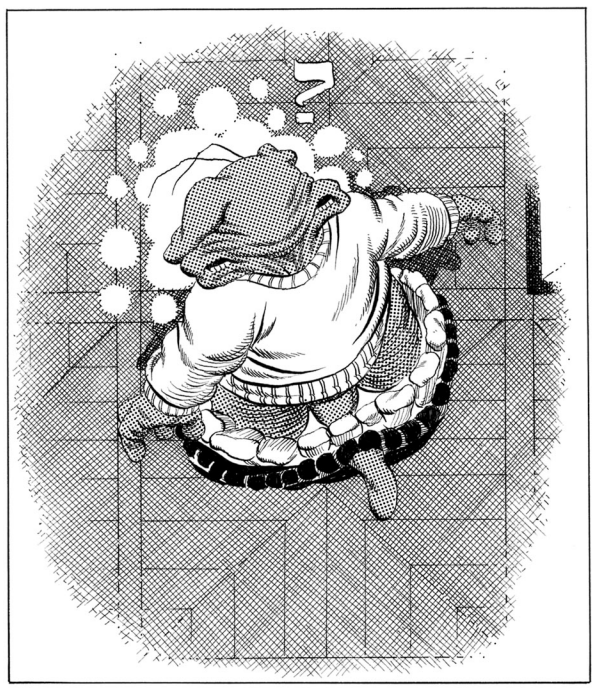
SIR?
SORRY, DID I WAKE YOU?
I'M uh
TOING!
I'M AFRAID I KNOCKED BEFORE I HEARD YOU SNORING
FLUMP
SHEP. SHEP?
HE'S ...?
HE'S ...?
UH.
I'M AFRAID NOT, SIR.
SLUMP
FLUMP
FLUMP


DAMMIT, O'VERILY! DIDN'T YOU BRIBE THE UPPER FELDAN "FOO-FOO" LIKE CEREBUS TOLD YOU TO?
ER--THAT WAS LAST TIME, SIR. THIS TIME YOU TOLD ME TO OFFER HIM A COMPROMISE.
DAMMIT, O'VERITY! DIDN'T YOU OFFER THE UPPER FELDAN "FOO-FOO" A COMPROMISE LIKE CEREBUS TOLD YOU TO?
YES, SIR-- AND HE'S AGREED. BUT HE'S ALSO ISSUED A-- uhm-- STATEMENT
STATEMENT?! WHAT SORT OF STATEMENT?
"THE REPRESENTATIVE OF Le SANCTUAIRE UPPER FELDA des RICKE et JOANNE, LESBIENNES WELCOMES THE GREAT CEREBUS' ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE GRAVE DANGER POSED BY AN UNCHAPERONED VISIT WITH HIS SON. THE REPRESENTATIVE FURTHER WELCOMES THE GREAT CEREBUS' IMPLICIT AGREEMENT THAT THE ROLE OF THE ANDROGYNE, THE TRIBADE, THE SEXUAL INVERT, THE TRANSGENDERED, THE DUAL-GENDERED AND THE MULTI-GENDERED IS OF CENTRAL AND PARAMOUNT IMPORTANCE IN AND TO OUR FAITH, IN AND TO OUR SOCIETY, IN AND TO OUR SANCTUARIES, IN AND TO THE SEAT OF TRUTH; IN THE NAME OF THE BLESSED MOTHER, HER BLESSED DAUGHTER AND IN THE NAME OF THE SCARY TAMPON."


WELL, OF ALL THE COCKEYED, HARE BRAINED, IDIOTIC,
KLONK.
Shk. Shk. Shk.
Flump.
WHAT IN THE NAME OF*
Shk.


Shk.
Tump.
THE uhm "FOO-FOO" ASKED ME TO...CONVEY TO YOU...HIS MOST SOLEMN ASSURANCES, SIR...
...THAT HE WILL LIFT HIS VETO OF YOUR SON'S VISIT...
THE MINUTE THAT I RETURN WITH uhm WITH YOUR...
...SIGNATURE...
ON THAT COPY OF HIS STATEMENT


Drip

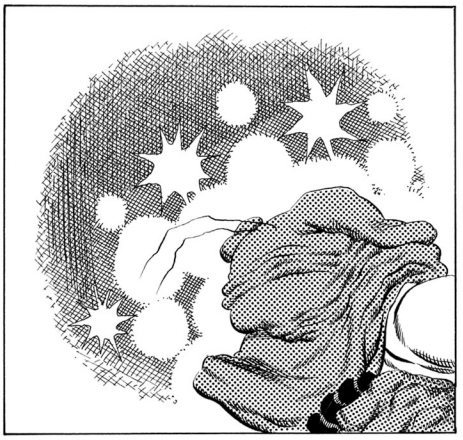


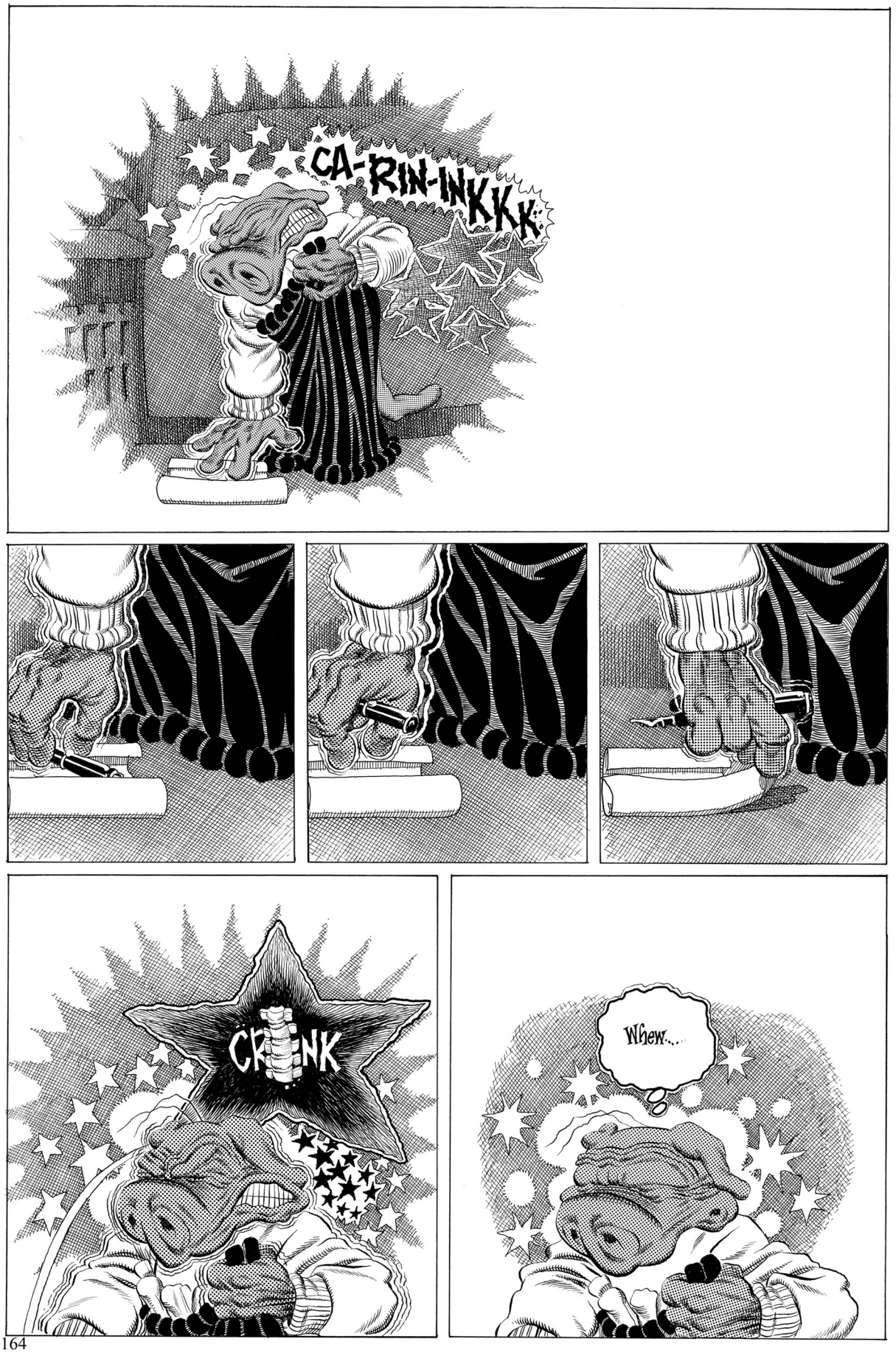
CRINKNK
Drip.

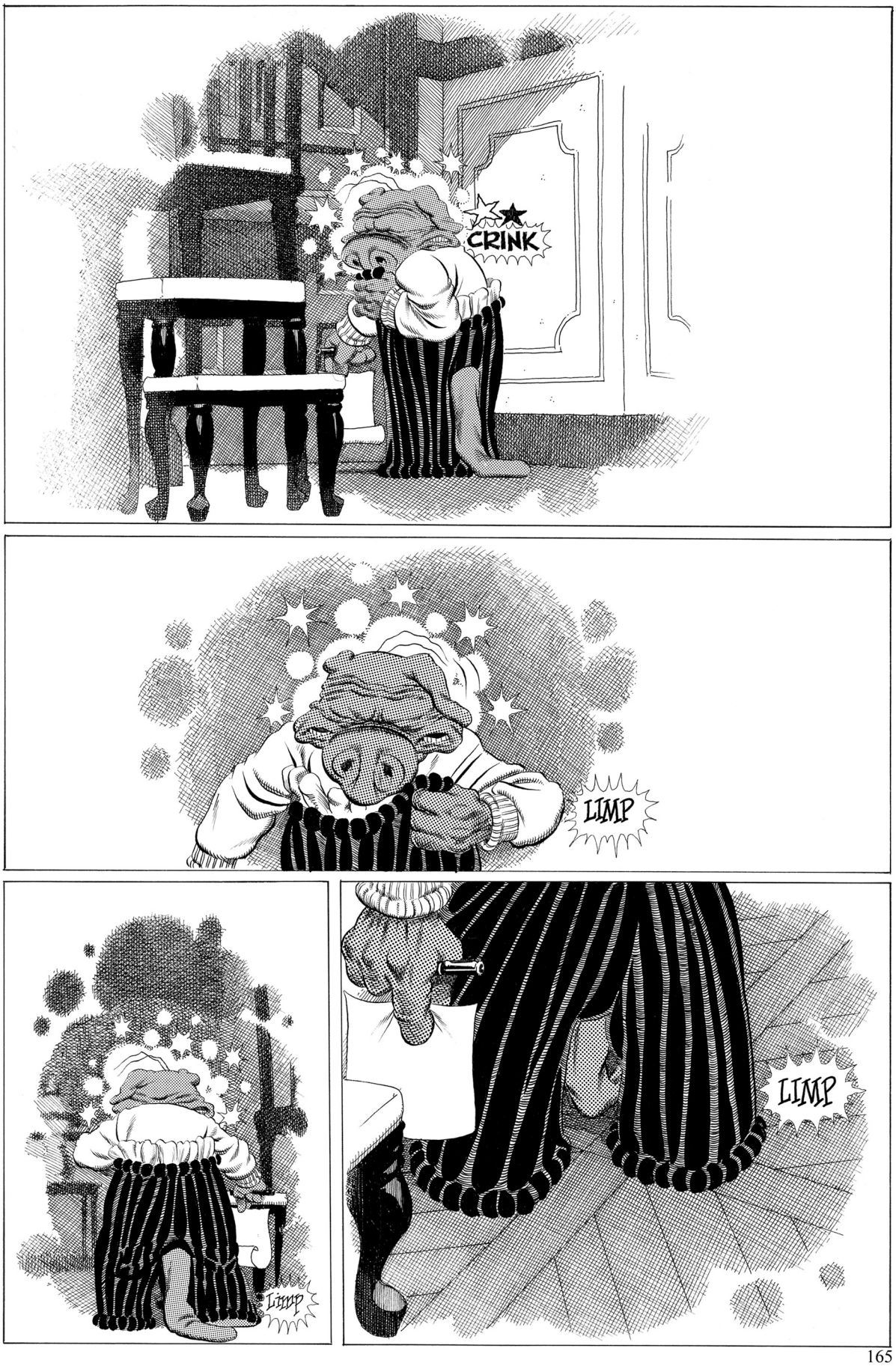
SQUISH
LIMP
Limp

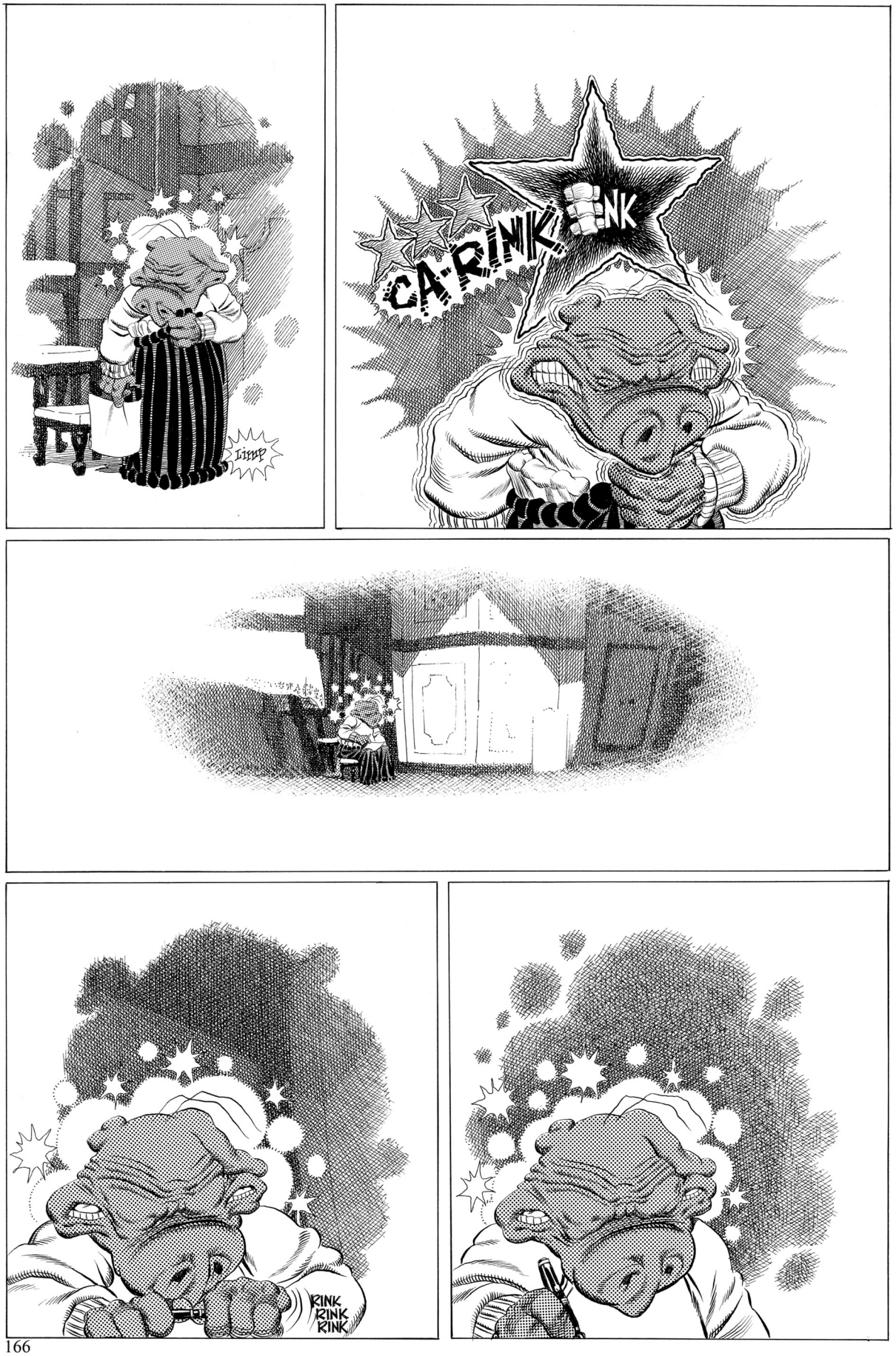
LIMP

Limp



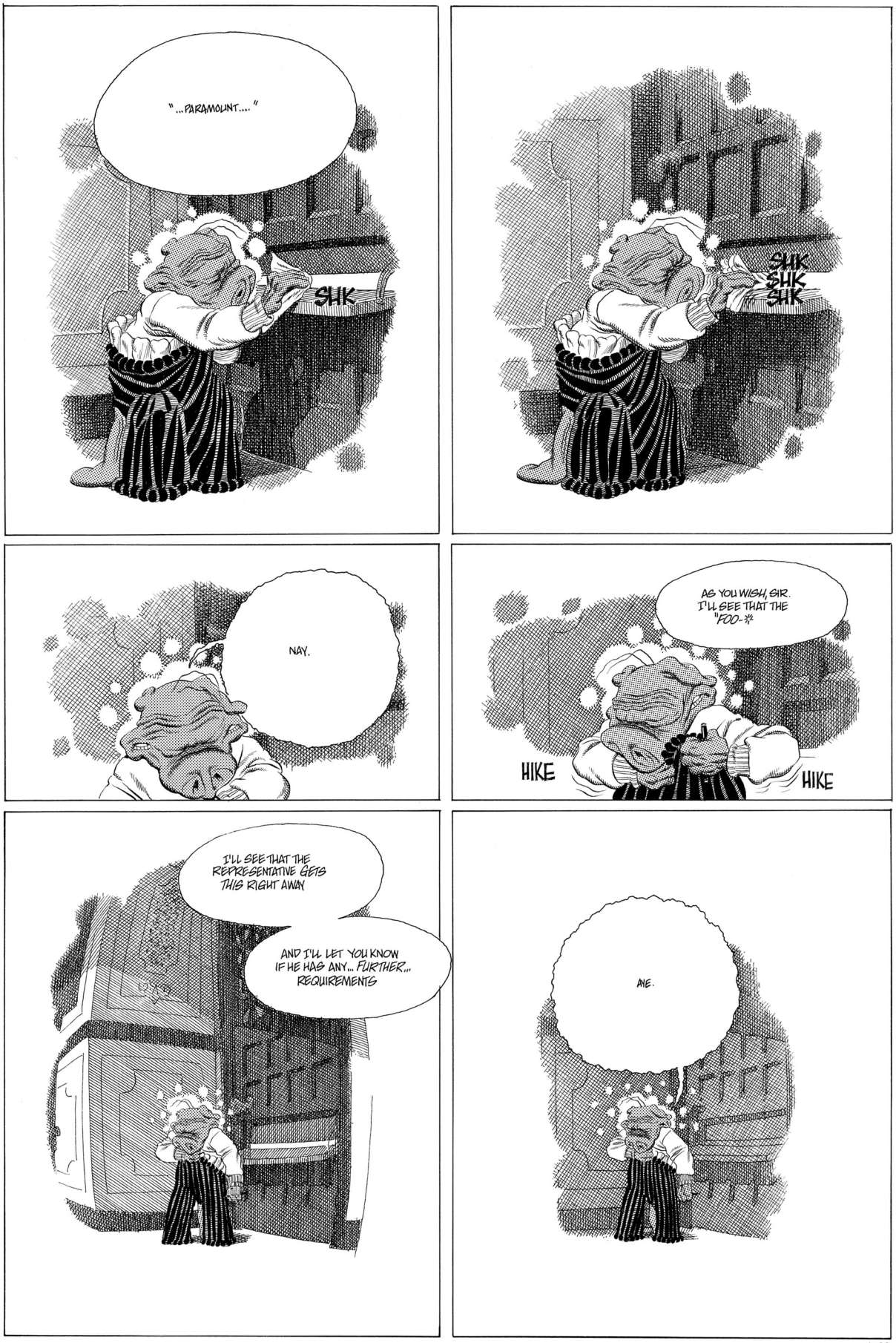

CA-RIN-INKKK
CR NK
Whew....

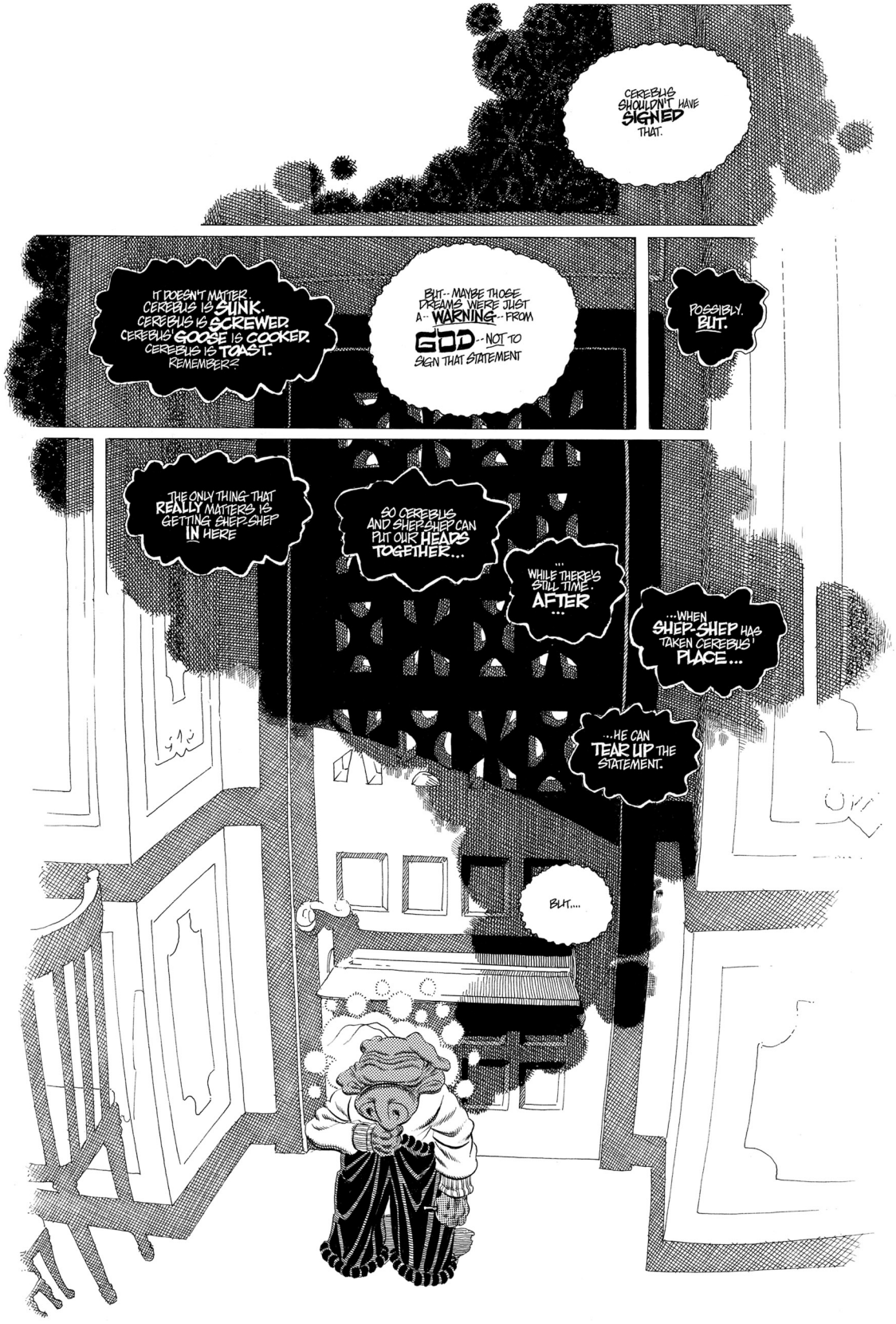

CRINK
LIMP
LIMP
LIMP


CA-RINK
RINK
RINK
RINK
RINK

IF YOU'D LIKE SOME TIME TO THINK ABOUT IT, SIR, I CAN COME BACK LATER.
WHAT?
I SAID: "IF YOU'D LIKE SOME TIME TO THINK ABOUT IT, SIR...
CRINK
NAY.
CRINK

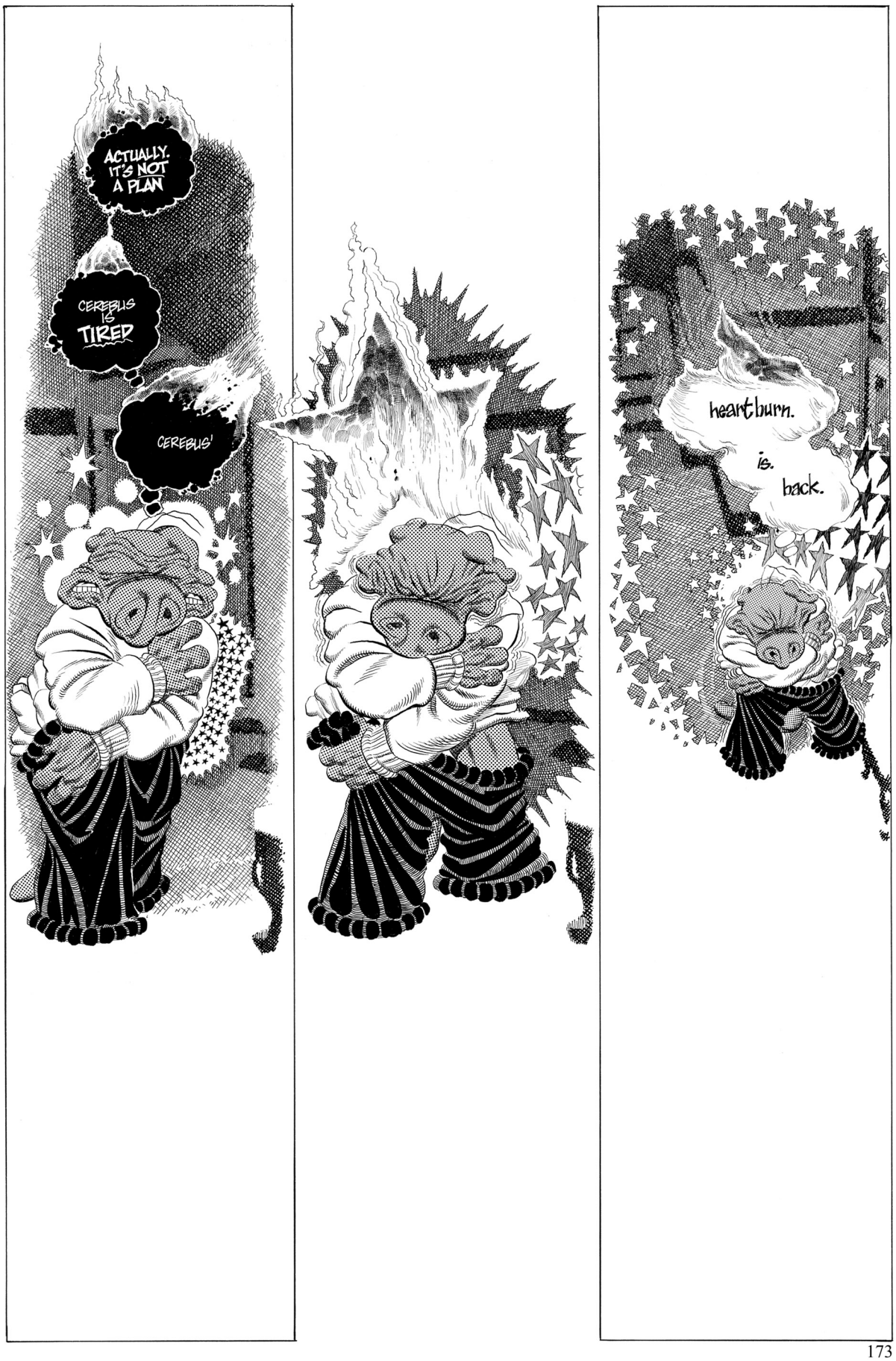
NAY.
sktch
sktch sktch sktch
RINK
RINK
RINK
ARE YOU SURE, SIR?
CA-R-INK
I THOUGHT THE UHM...
I THOUGHT SOME OF...THE...
LIMP
...WORDING...
Limp
PARTICULARLY THE...THE...
LIMP
THE WORDS "CENTRAL" AND...
Limp

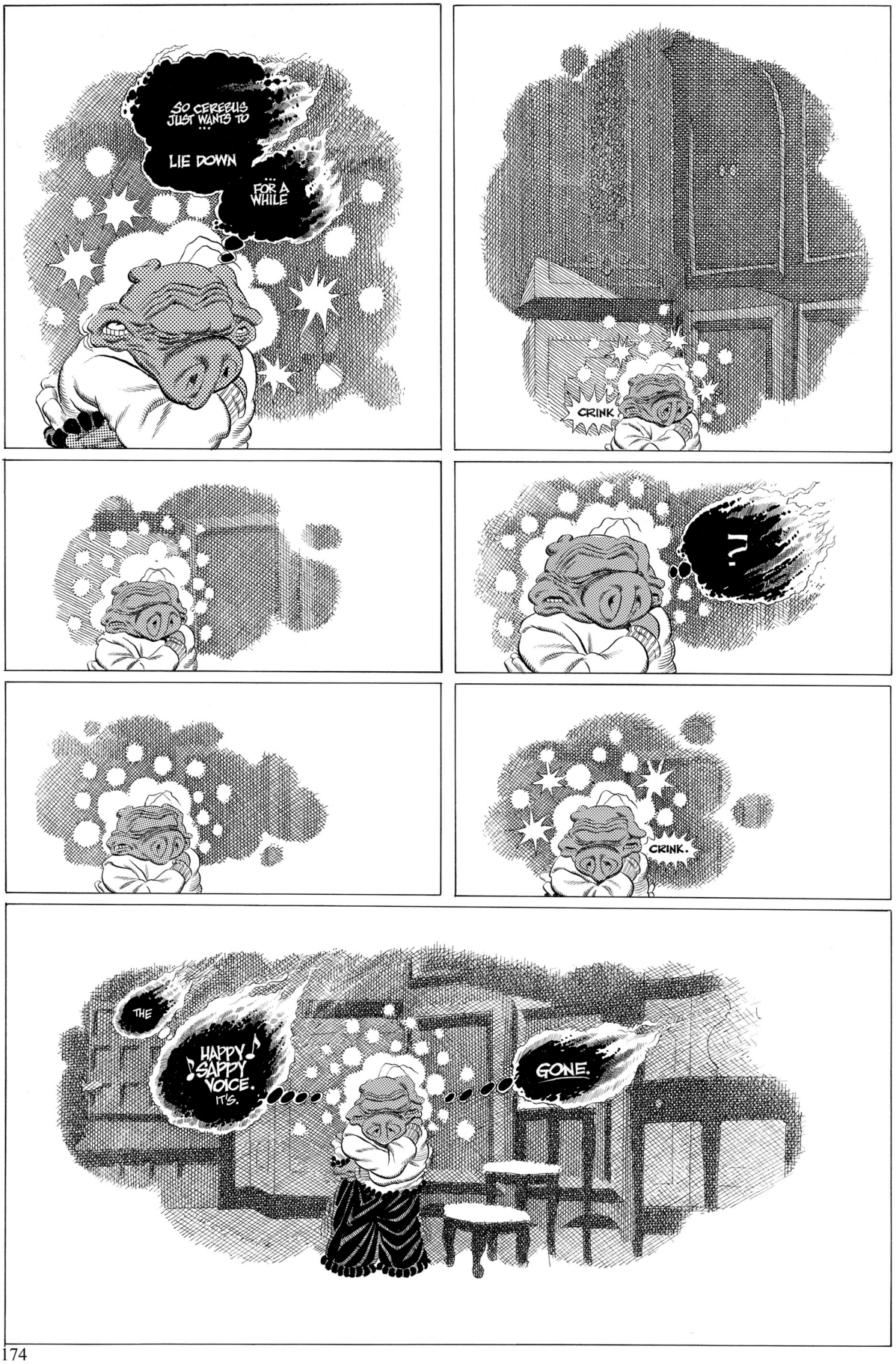

"...PARAMOUNT...."
SHK
SHK
SHK
SHK
NAY.
AS YOU WISH, SIR. I'LL SEE THAT THE "FOO-*"
HIKE
HIKE
I'LL SEE THAT THE REPRESENTATIVE GETS THIS RIGHT AWAY
AND I'LL LET YOU KNOW IF HE HAS ANY... FURTHER... REQUIREMENTS
AYE.


CEREBUS SHOULDN'T HAVE SIGNED THAT.
IT DOESN'T MATTER. CEREBUS IS SUNK. CEREBUS IS SCREWED. CEREBUS' GOOSE IS COOKED. CEREBUS IS TOAST. REMEMBER?
BUT-- MAYBE THOSE DREAMS WERE JUST A-- WARNING-- FROM GOD-- NOT TO SIGN THAT STATEMENT
POSSIBLY. BUT.
THE ONLY THING THAT REALLY MATTERS IS GETTING SHEP-SHEP IN HERE
SO CEREBUS AND SHEP-SHEP CAN PUT OUR HEADS TOGETHER...
... WHILE THERE'S STILL TIME. AFTER ...
...WHEN SHEP-SHEP HAS TAKEN CEREBUS' PLACE...
...HE CAN TEAR UP THE STATEMENT.
BUT....

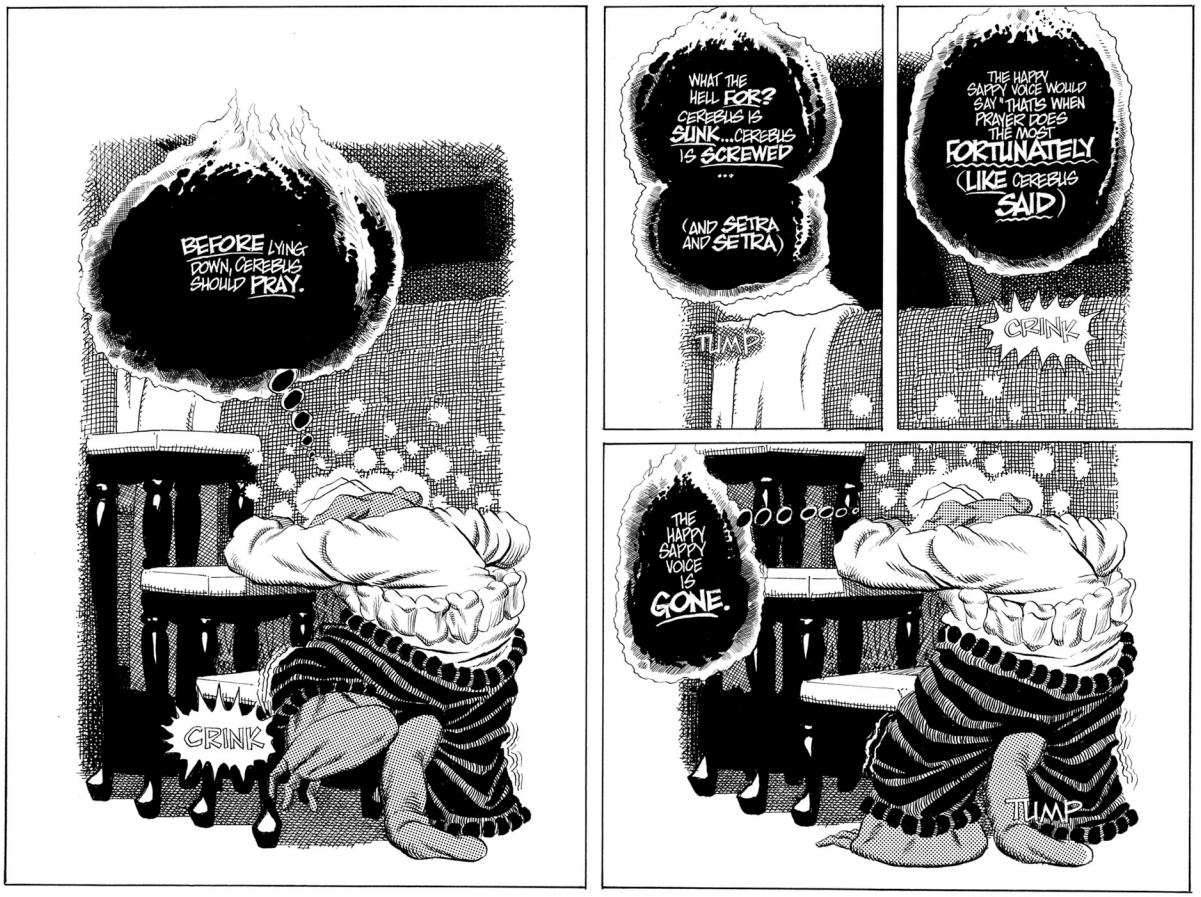
Tak Tak Tak
BUT?
LIMP
BUT CEEBUS SHOULDN'T HAVE SIGNED THAT

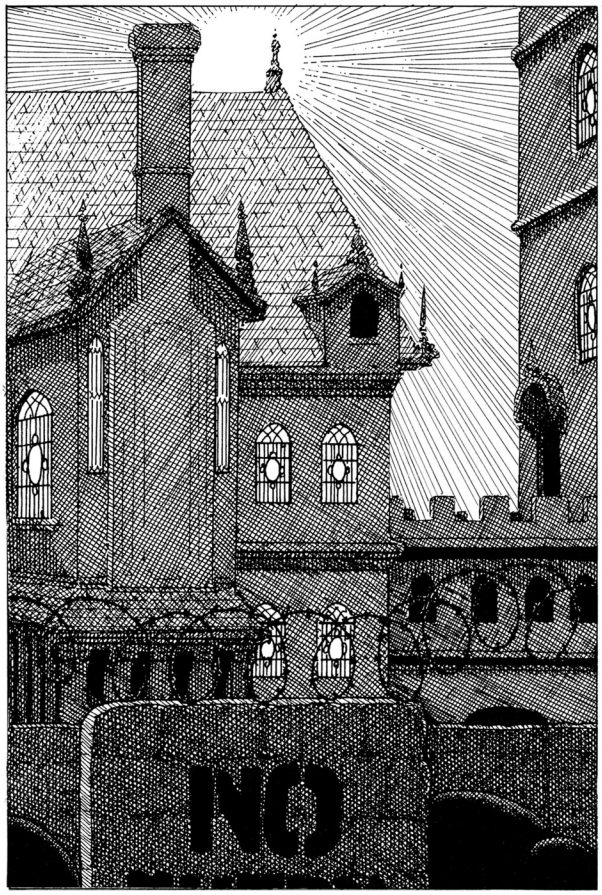
WELL. IT'S TOO LATE NOW.
NOT NECESSARILY! IF CEREBUS TURNS AROUND REAL FAST AND RACES BACK TO THE DOOR AND POUNDS ON IT YELLING "COME BACK!" "COME BACK!"
(RIGHT. IT WOULD PROBABLY STILL BE TOO LATE)
Limp
?
WHERE'S CEREBUS GOING?
BACK TO BED.
?!
LIMP
BACK TO BED?!
THAT'S BRILLIANT!
(WHY DIDN'T CEREBUS THINK OF THAT BEFORE?) WHEN SHER-SHEP COMES IN CEREBUS WILL BE IN BED IN THE MIDDLE OF THE DAY-- SHER-SHEP WILL THINK CEREBUS IS DYING SO HE'LL KNOW HOW SERIOUS THE SITUATION IS!
WHAT. A. GREAT. PLAN!
Limp


ACTUALLY. IT'S NOT A PLAN
CEREBUS IS TIRED
CEREBUS!
heartburn.
is.
back.


SO CEREBELLUS JUST WANTS TO ...
LIE DOWN ...
FOR A WHILE
CRINK.
M.
CRINK.
THE
HAPPY SAPPY VOICE. IT'S.
GONE.

FINALLY.
SOME GOOD NEWS FOR A CHANGE


BEFORE LYING DOWN, CEREBUS SHOULD PRAY.
CRINK
WHAT THE HELL FOR? CEREBUS IS SUNK...CEREBUS IS SCREWED ... (AND SETRA AND SETRA)
TUMP
THE HAPPY SAPPY VOICE WOULD SAY "THAT'S WHEN PRAYER DOES THE MOST FORTUNATELY (LIKE CEREBUS SAID)
CRINK
THE HAPPY SAPPY VOICE IS GONE.
TUMP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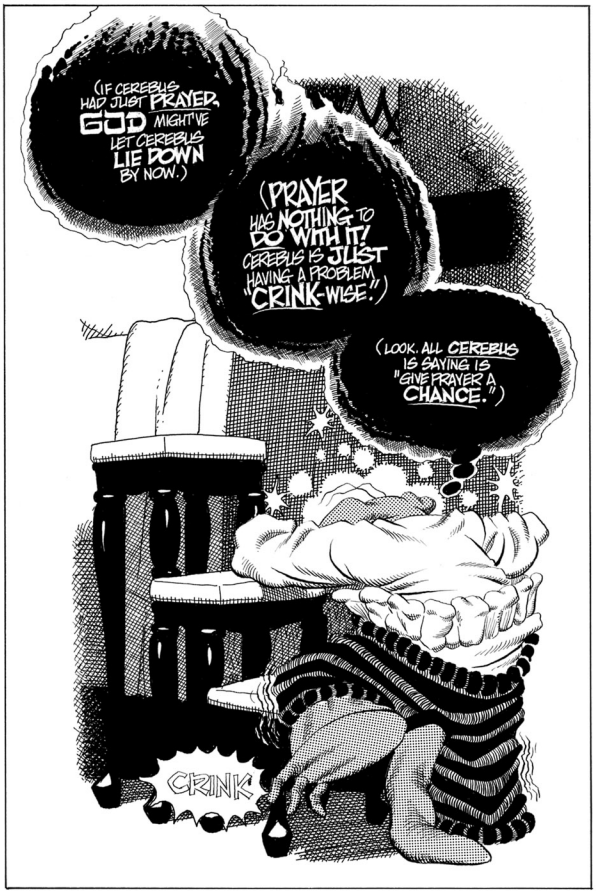
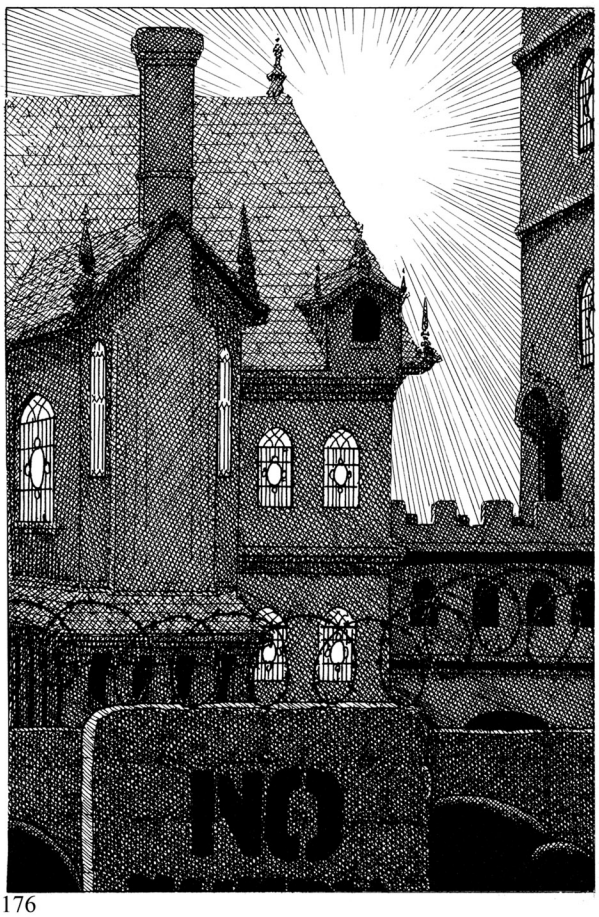
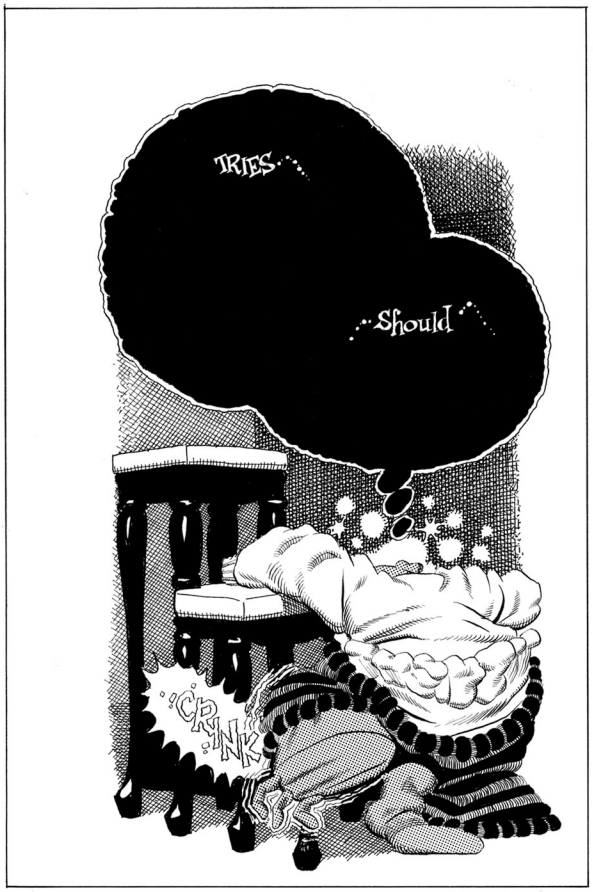
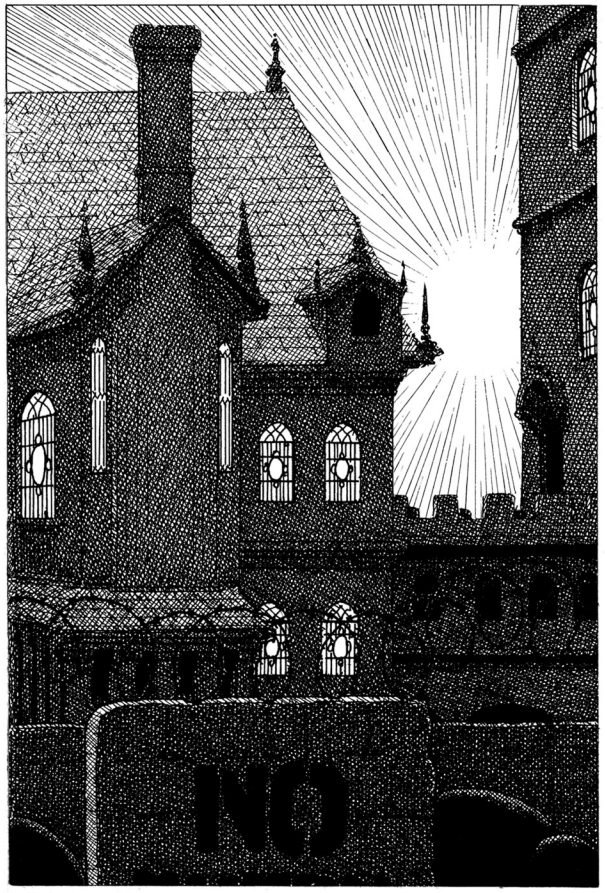

(IF CEREBUS HAD JUST PRAYER, GOD MIGHT'VE LET CEREBUS LIE DOWN BY NOW.)
(PRAYER HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH IT! CEREBUS IS JUST HAVING A PROBLEM "CRINK-WISE.")
(LOOK. ALL CEREBUS IS SAYING IS "GIVE PRAYER A CHANCE.")
CRINK


NO

(CEREBUS! "CRINKS" ARE BARELY GETTING OFF THE FLOOR! CEREBUS ISN'T GOING TO BE ABLE TO STAND UP SOON, LET ALONE CLIMB UP INTO BED)
(CEREBUS ALMOST GOT IT LAST TIME-- JUST A FEW MORE TRIES SHOULD-)
CRINK


TRIES...
...Should
CR-INK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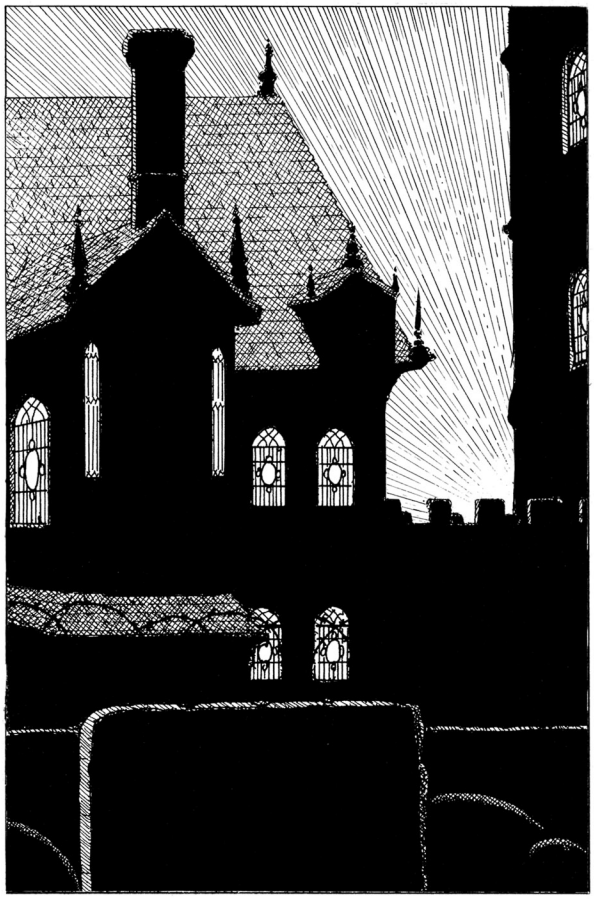
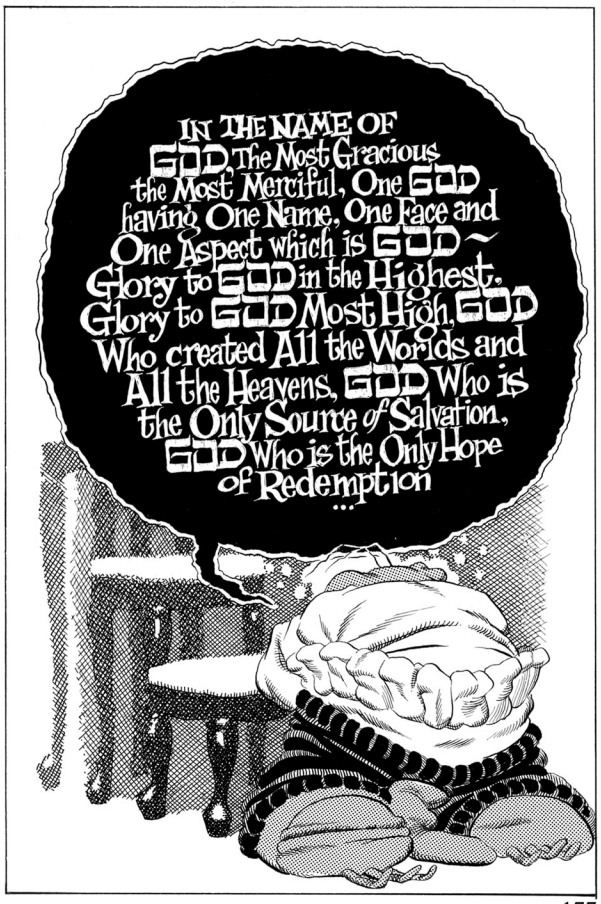
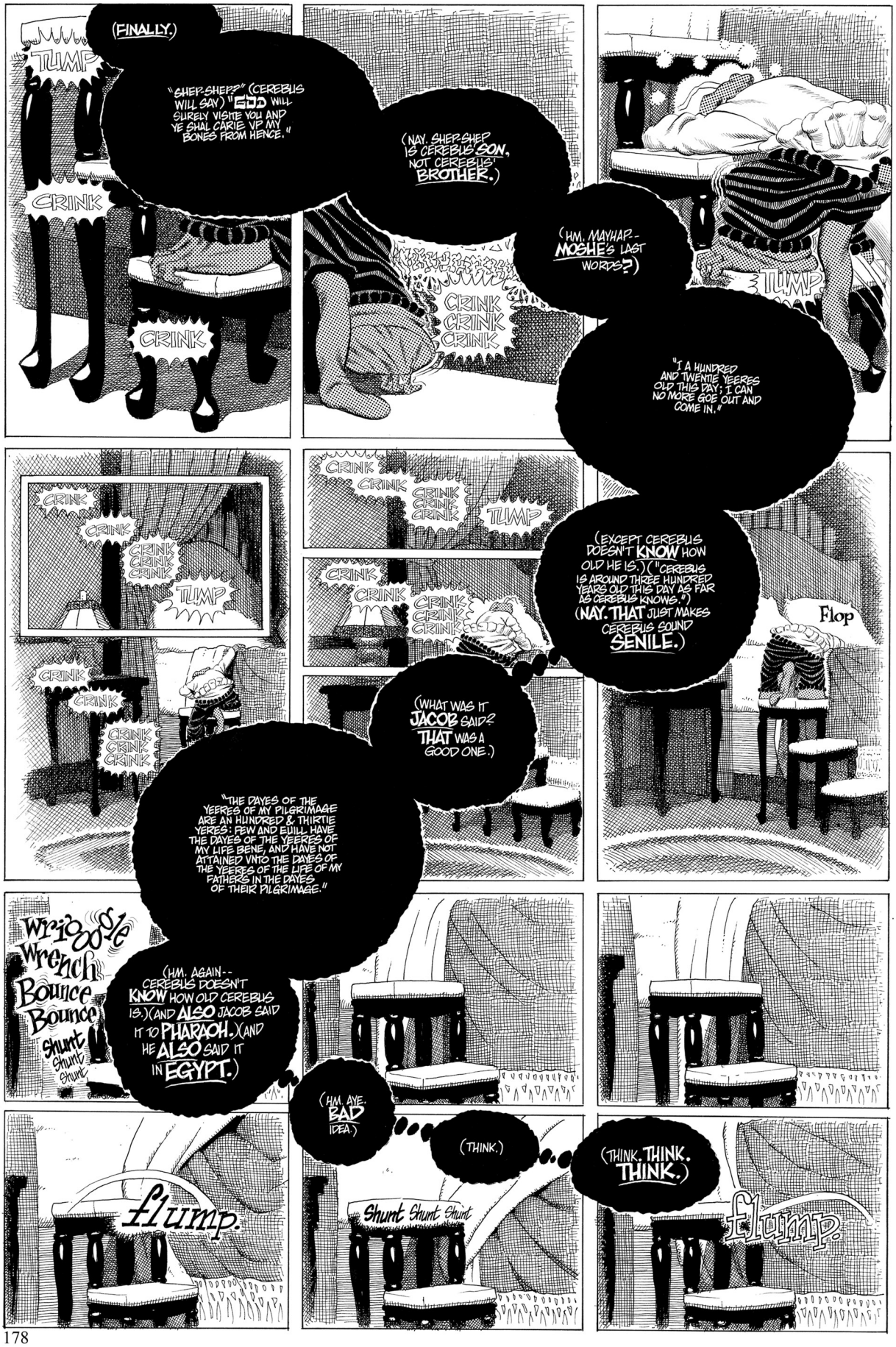
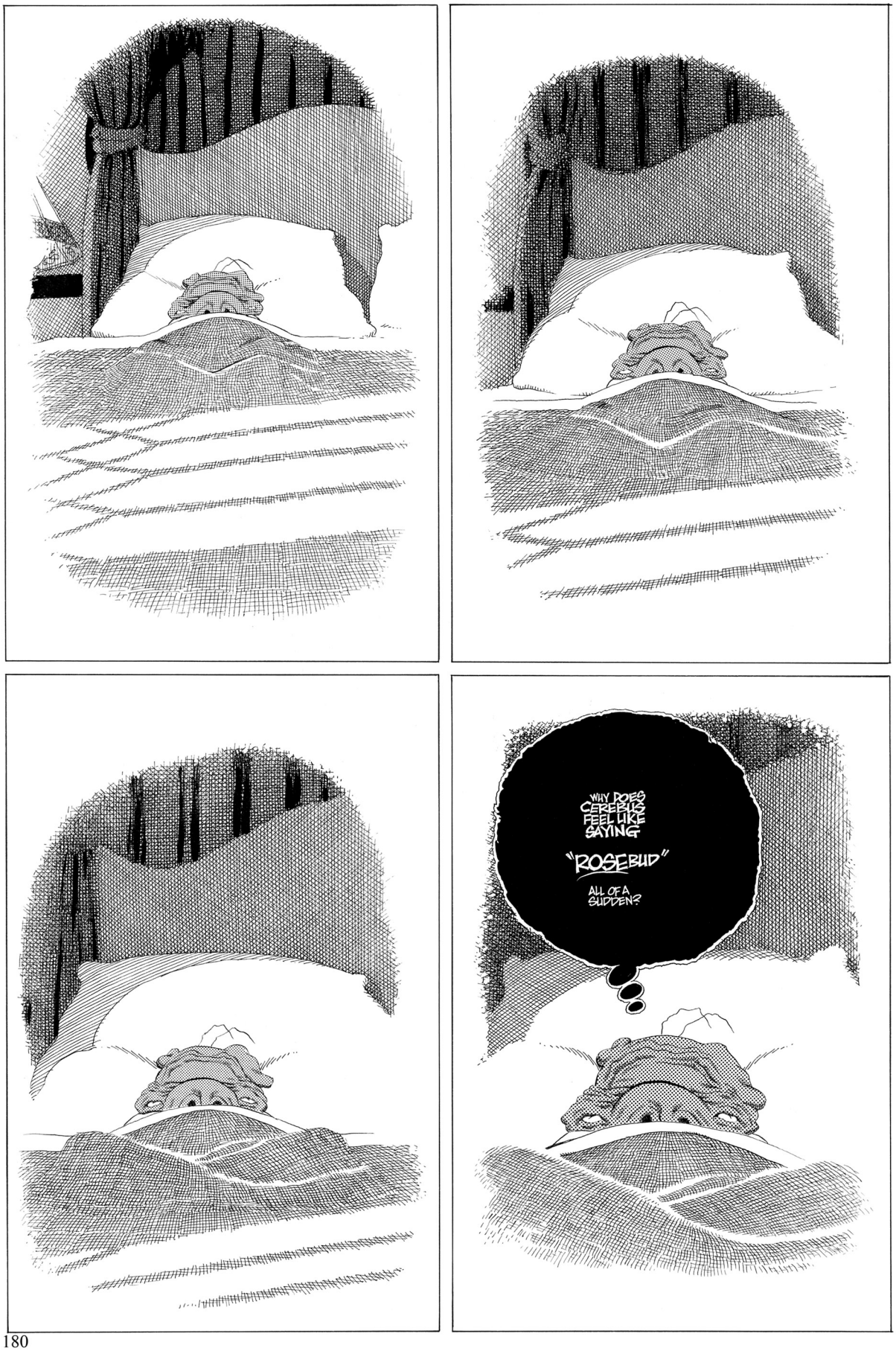
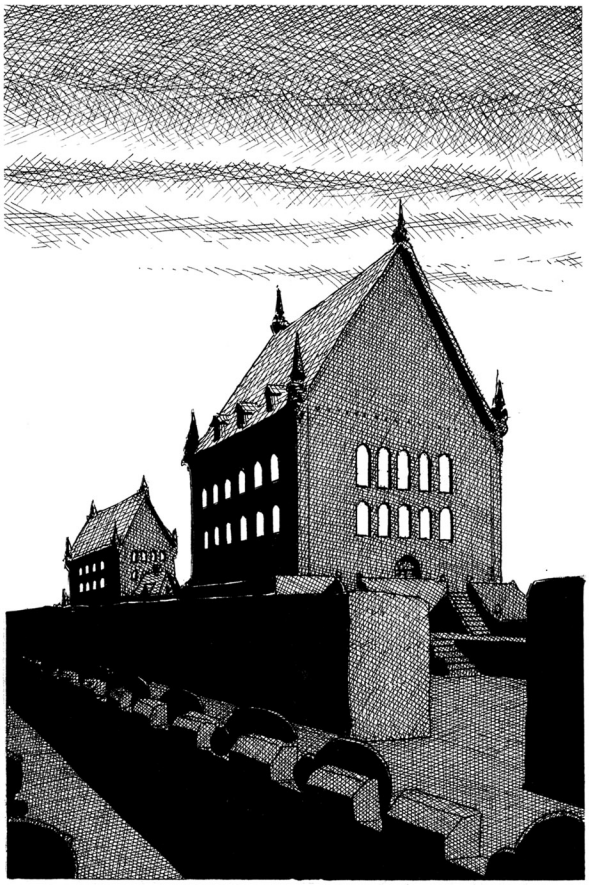
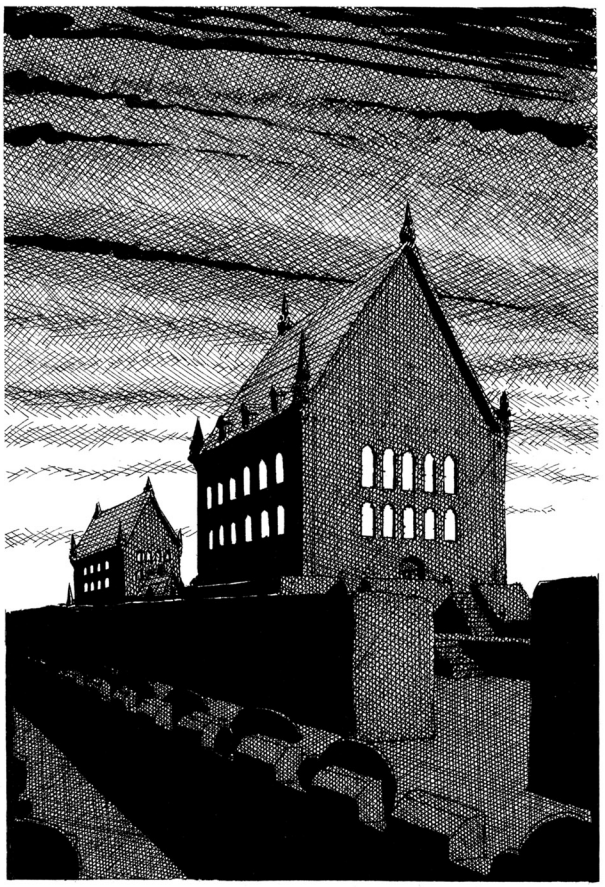


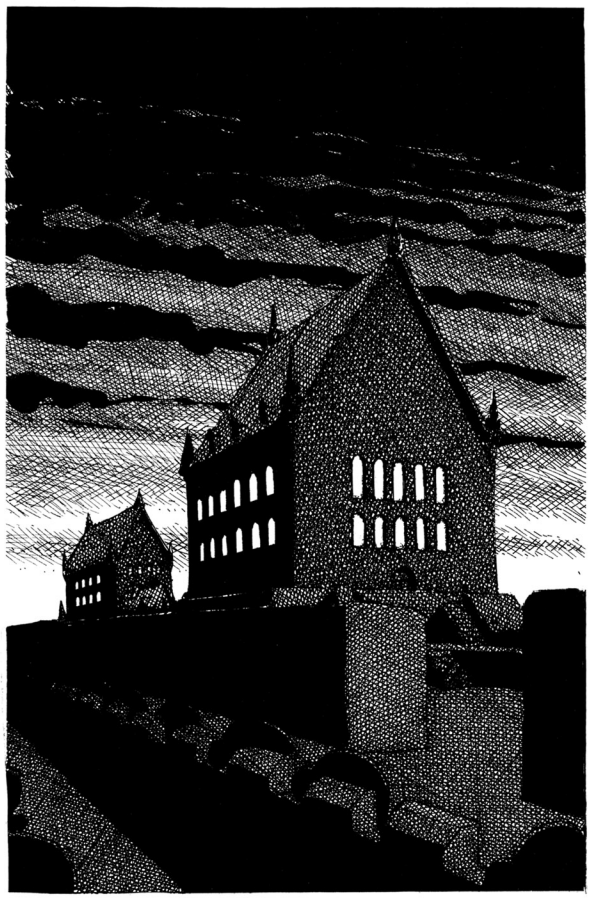

IN THE NAME OF GOD, The Most Gracious the Most Merciful, One GOD having One Name, One Face and One Aspect which is GOD ~ Glory to GOD in the Highest. Glory to GOD Most High, GOD Who created All the Worlds and All the Heavens, GOD Who is the Only Source of Salvation, GOD Who is the Only Hope of Redemption ...

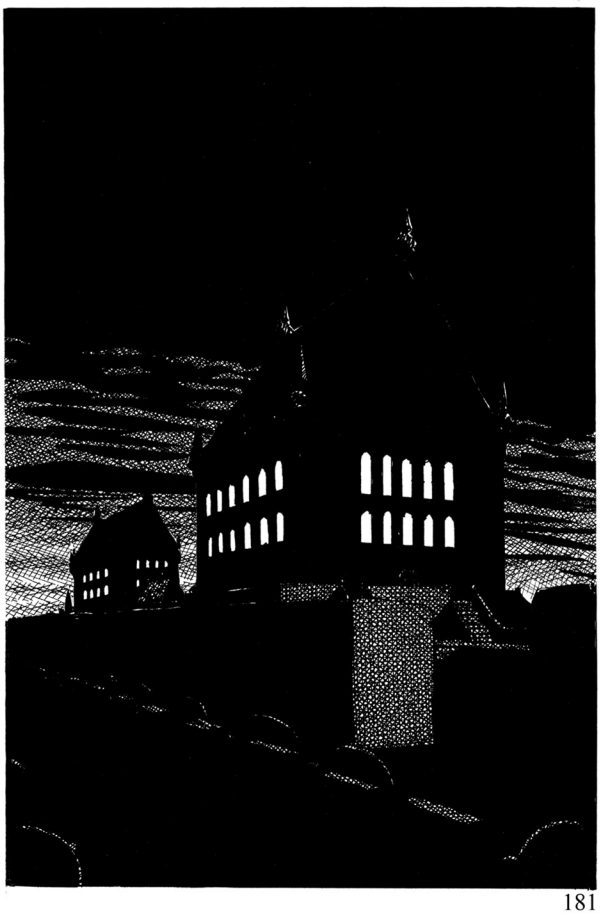

(FINALLY.)
TUMP
"SHER-SHEP?" (CEREBUS WILL SAY) "GOD WILL SURELY VISITE YOU AND YE SHAL CARIE VP MY BONES FROM HENCE."
CRINK
CRINK
(NAY. SHER-SHEP IS CEREBUS' SON, NOT CEREBUS' BROTHER.)
CRINK CRINK CRINK
(HM. MAYHAP-- MOSHE'S LAST WORDS?)
TUMP
"I A HUNDRED AND TWENTIE YEERES OLD THIS DAY; I CAN NO MORE GOE OUT AND COME IN."
CRINK
CRINK
CRINK CRINK CRINK
TUMP
CRINK
CRINK
CRINK CRINK CRINK
(EXCEPT CEREBUS DOESN'T KNOW HOW OLD HE IS.) ("CEREBUS IS AROUND THREE HUNDRED YEARS OLD THIS DAY AS FAR AS CEREBUS KNOWS.") (NAY. THAT JUST MAKES CEREBUS SOUND SENILE.)
Flop
CRINK
CRINK
CRINK CRINK CRINK
(WHAT WAS IT JACOB SAID? THAT WAS A GOOD ONE.)
"THE DAYES OF THE YEERES OF MY PILGRIMAGE ARE AN HUNDRED & THIRTIE YERES: FEW AND EUILL HAVE THE DAYES OF THE YEERES OF MY LIFE BENE, AND HAVE NOT ATTAINED VNTO THE DAYES OF THE YEERES OF THE LIFE OF MY FATHERS IN THE DAYES OF THEIR PILGRIMAGE."
Wrigoole Wrench Bounce Bounce
Shunt Shunt Shunt
(HM. AGAIN-- CEREBUS DOESN'T KNOW HOW OLD CEREBUS IS.) (AND ALSO JACOB SAID IT TO PHARAOH.) (AND HE ALSO SAID IT IN EGYPT.)
(HM. AYE. BAD IDEA.)
(THINK.)
Shunt Shunt Shunt
(THINK. THINK. THINK.)
flump.
flump.

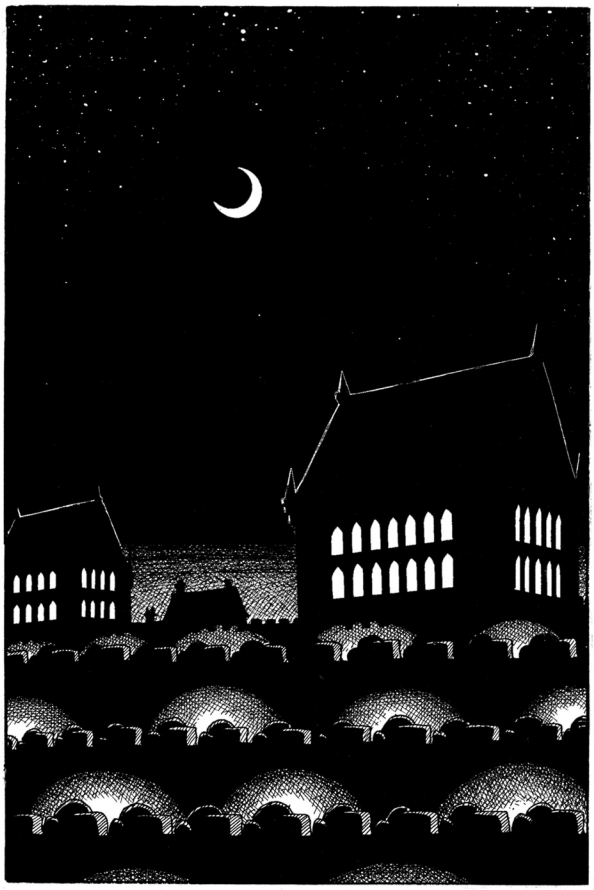
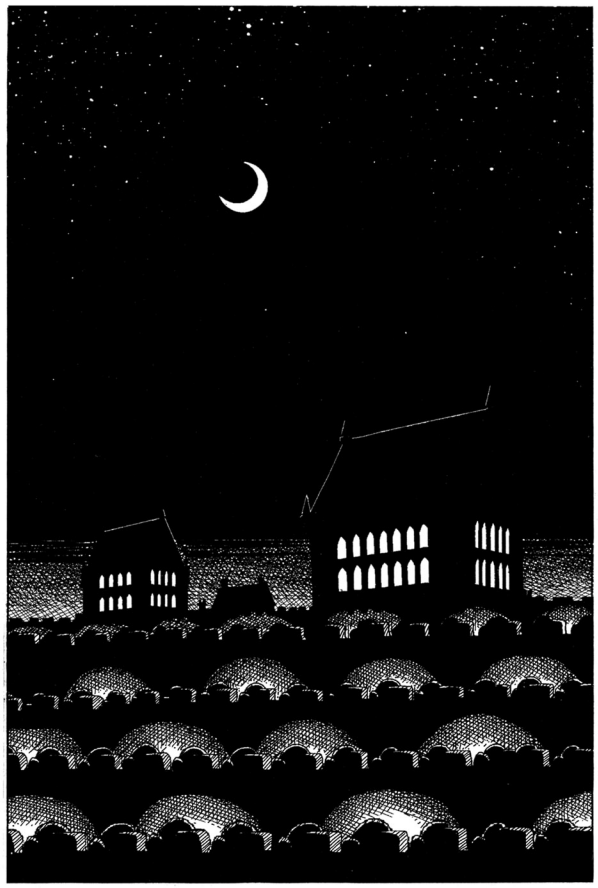

WHY DOES CEREBUS FEEL LIKE SAYING
"ROSEBUD"
ALL OF A SUDDEN?

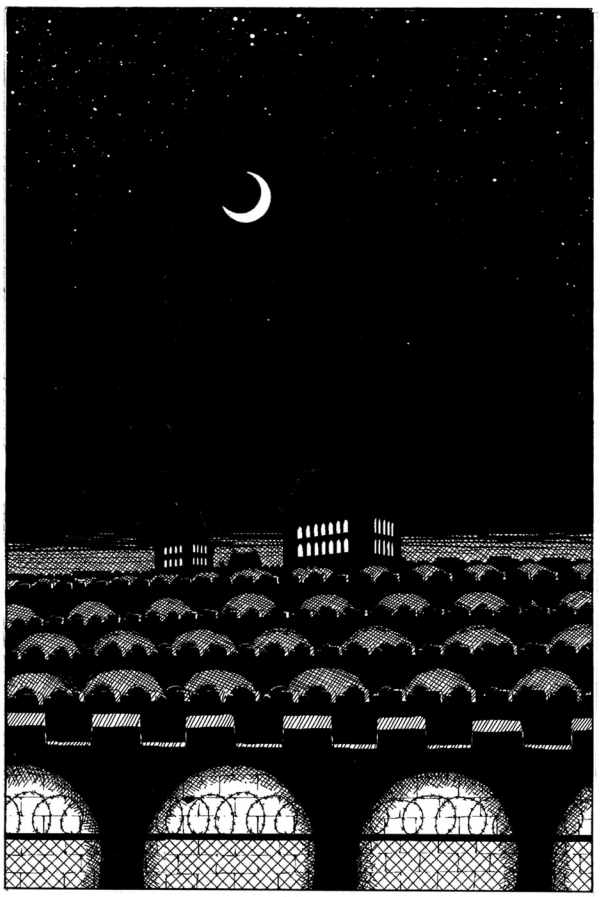


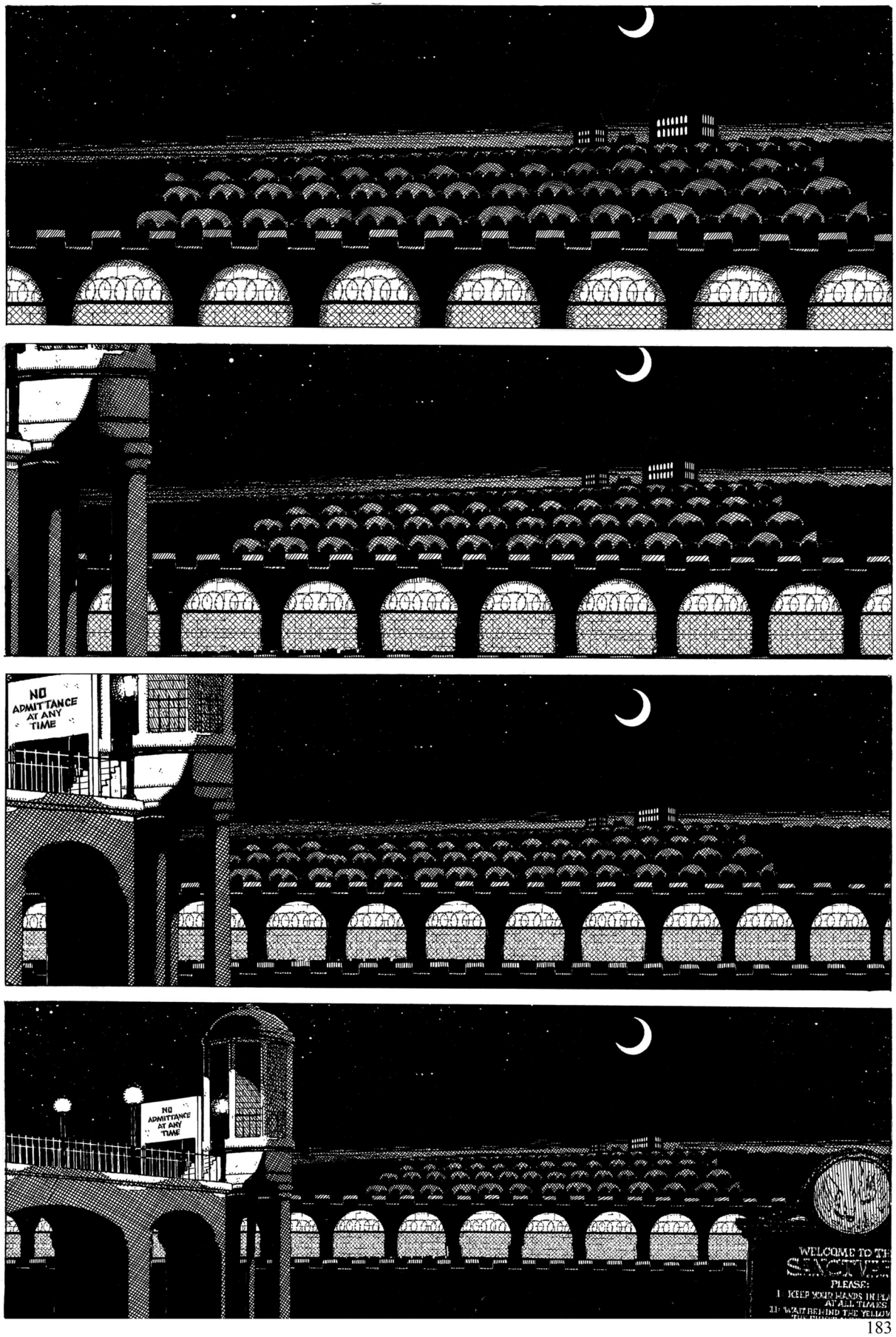


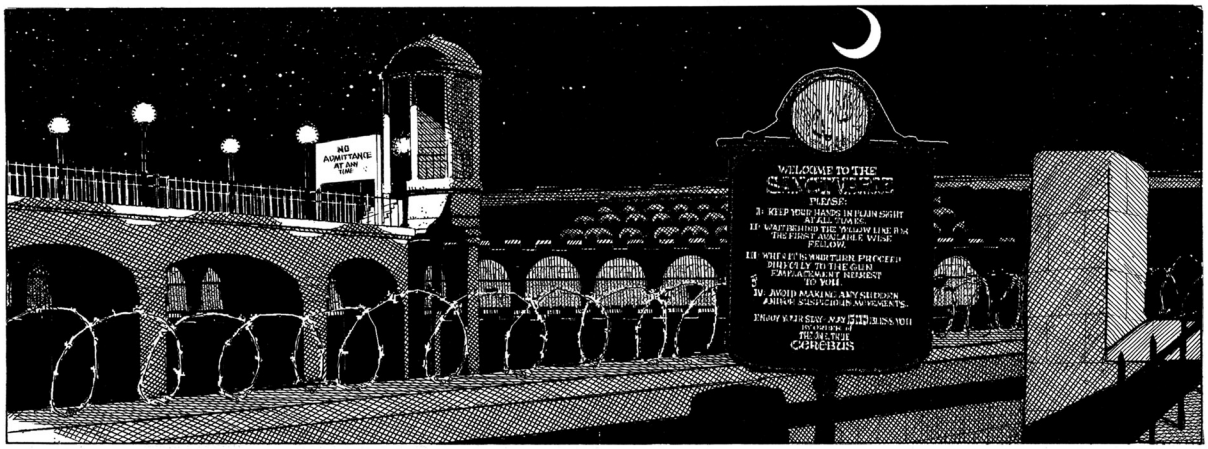


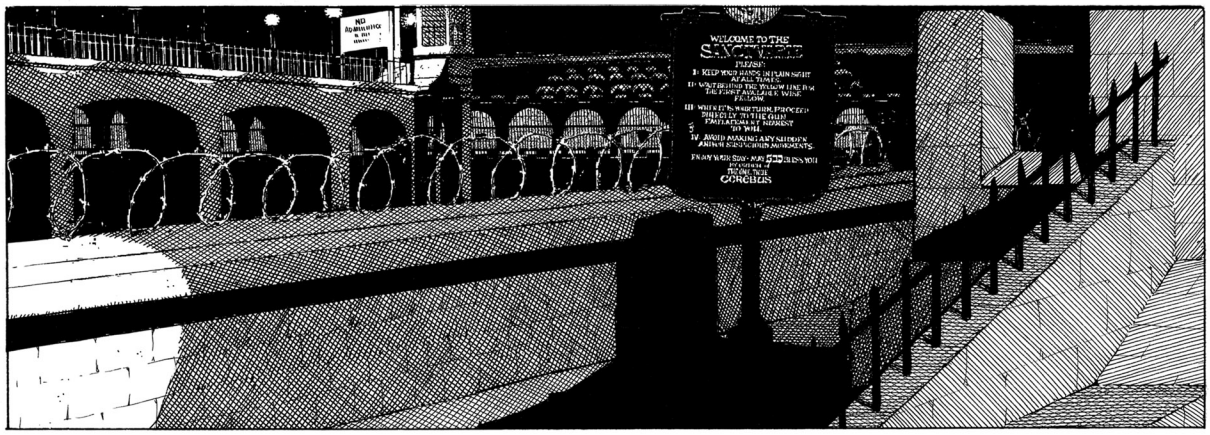





NO
ADMITTANCE
AT ANY
TIME
NO
ADMITTANCE
AT ANY
TIME
PLEASE:


NO ADMITTANCE AT ANY TIME
WELCOME TO THE
PLEASE:
I: KEEP YOUR HANDS IN PLAIN SIGHT AT ALL TIMES.
II: WAIT BEHIND THE YELLOW LINE FOR THE FIRST AVAILABLE WISE FELLOW.
III: WHEN IT IS YOUR TURN, PROCEED DIRECTLY TO THE GUN EMPLACEMENT NEAREST TO YOU.
IV: AVOID MAKING ANY SUDDEN AND/OR SUSPICIOUS MOVEMENTS.
ENJOY YOUR SIDE-AND-SIDE BLESS YOU
BY ORDER OF
THE MAJESTIC
CORÉBUS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PLEASE:
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ENJOY YOUR SIDE-AND-SIDE BLESS YOU
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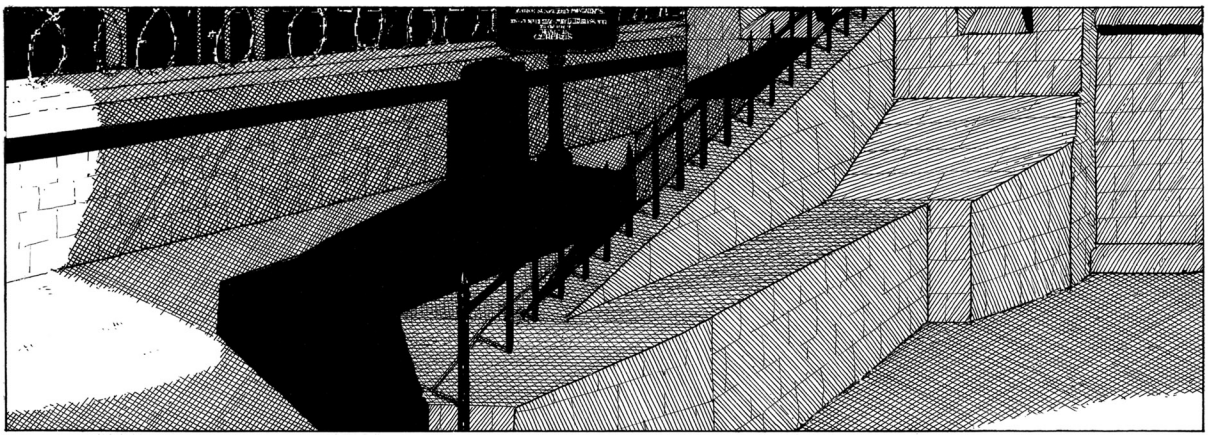

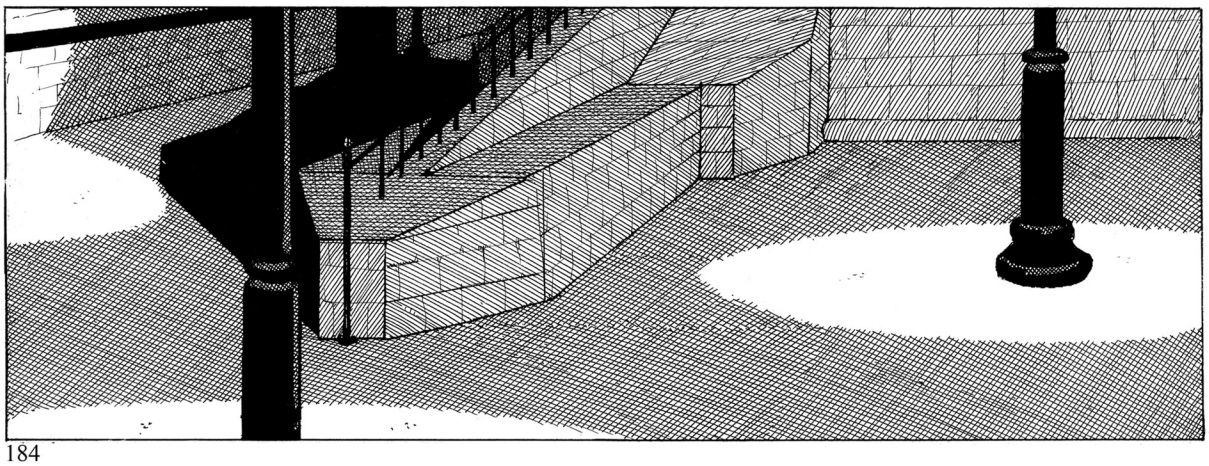

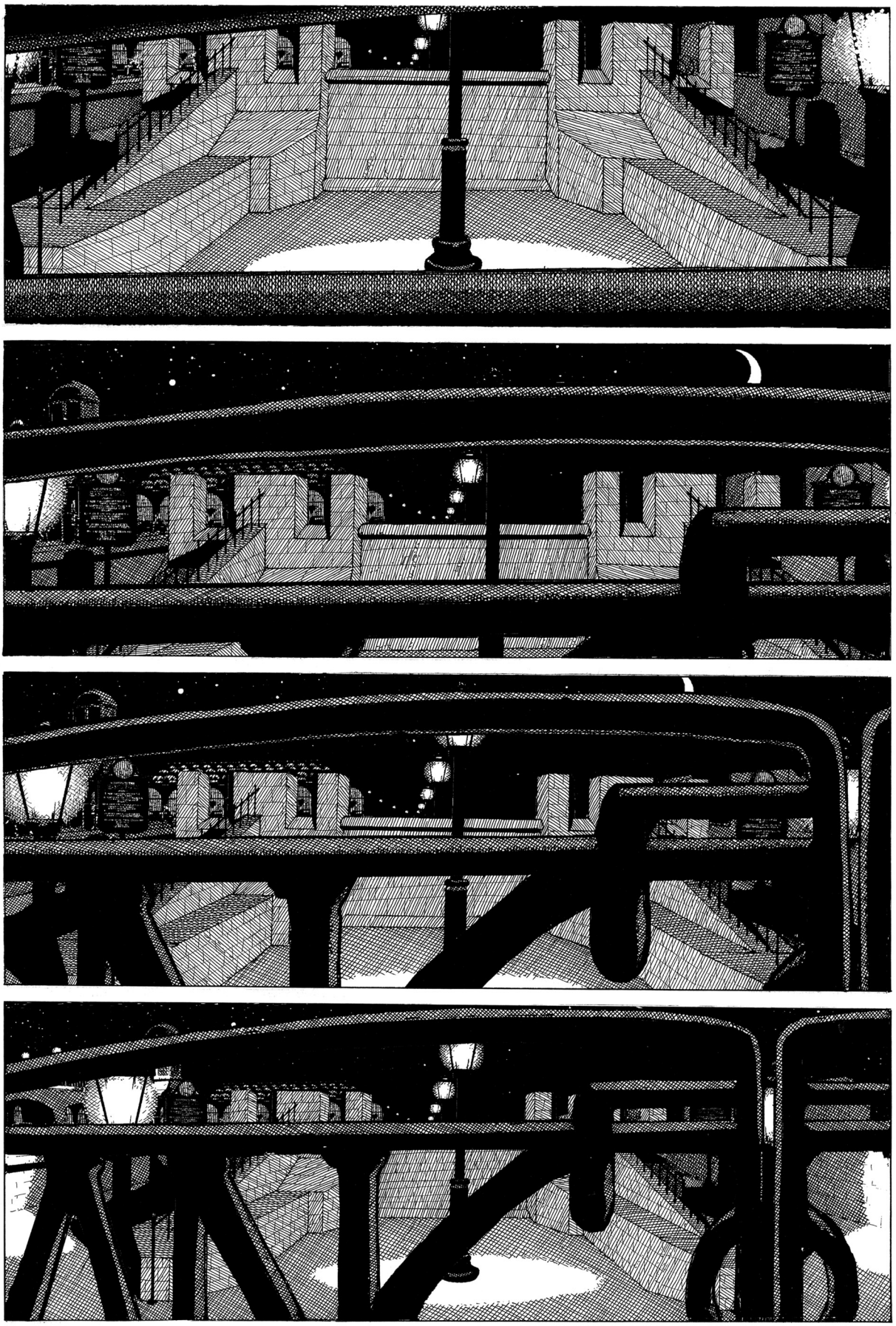

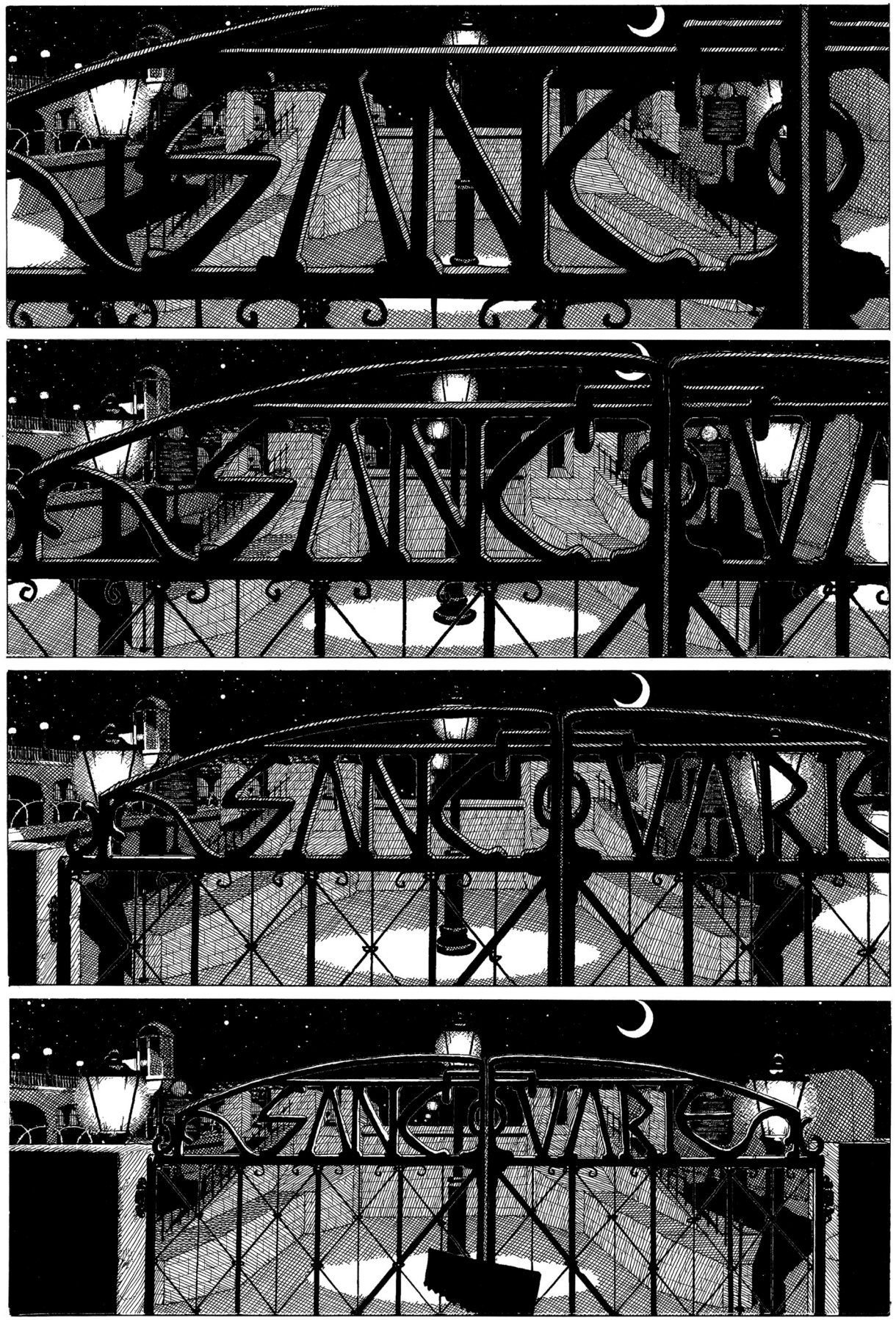
SANC
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SANCTVARI
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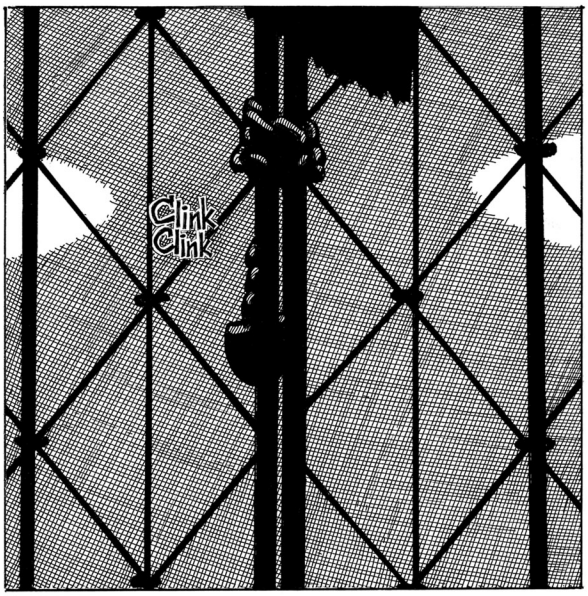
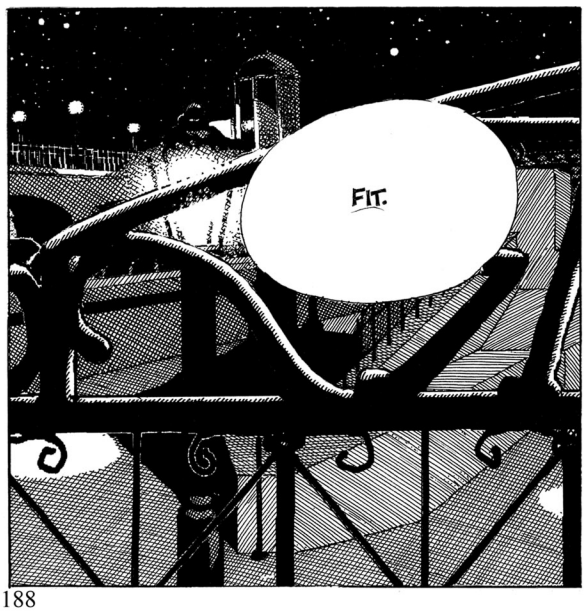
Ching

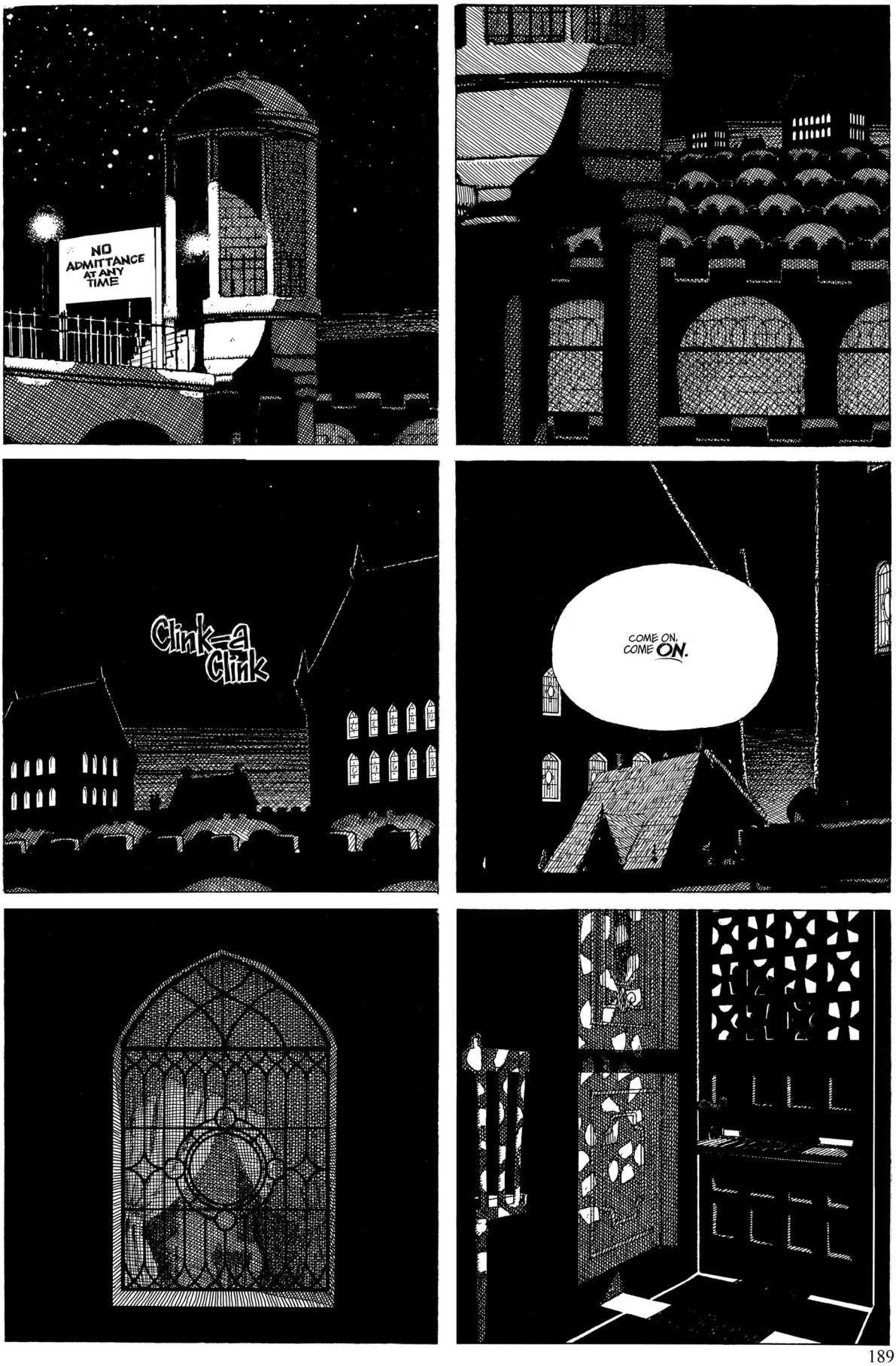

Clink
Clink

BLOODY OLD-FASHIONED LOCKS. THE KEYS NEVER

Clinka
Clinka
Clink

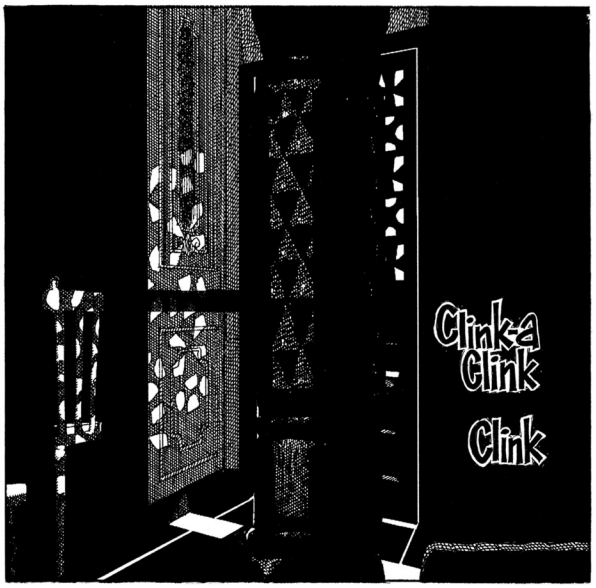

FIT.

PROPERLY.

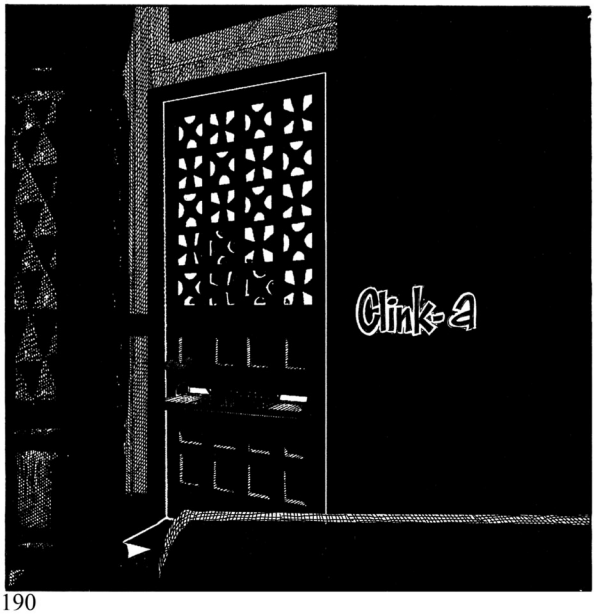

NO ADMITTANCE AT ANY TIME
Clink-a Clink
COME ON, COME ON.

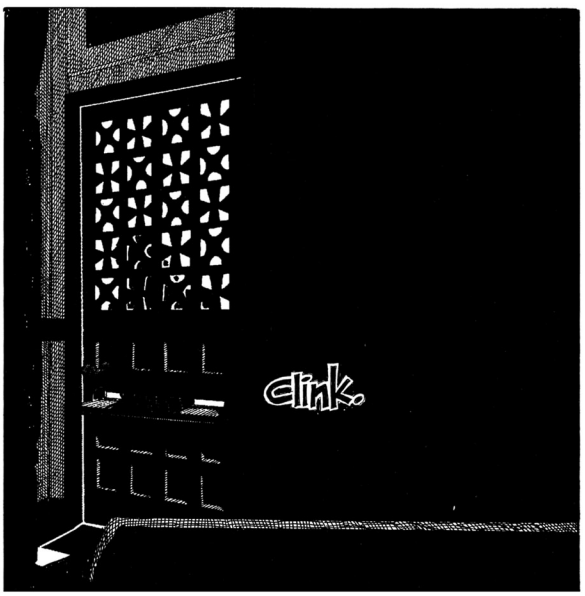
Clink
Clink

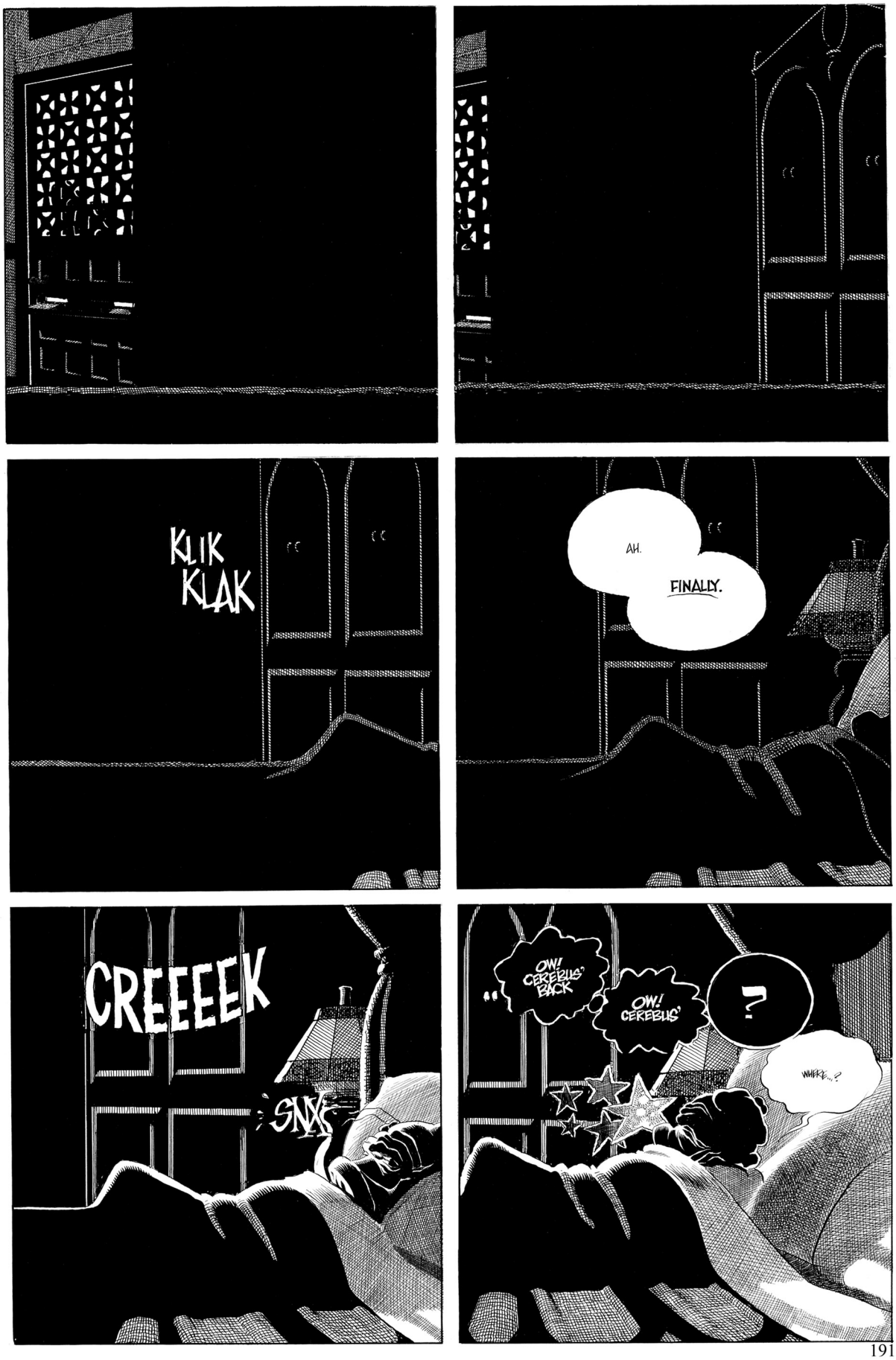
IT'S THE RIGHT KEY ... IT JUST SEEMS TO BE...


Clink-a
Clink
Clink

STUCK.
ON SOMETHING.

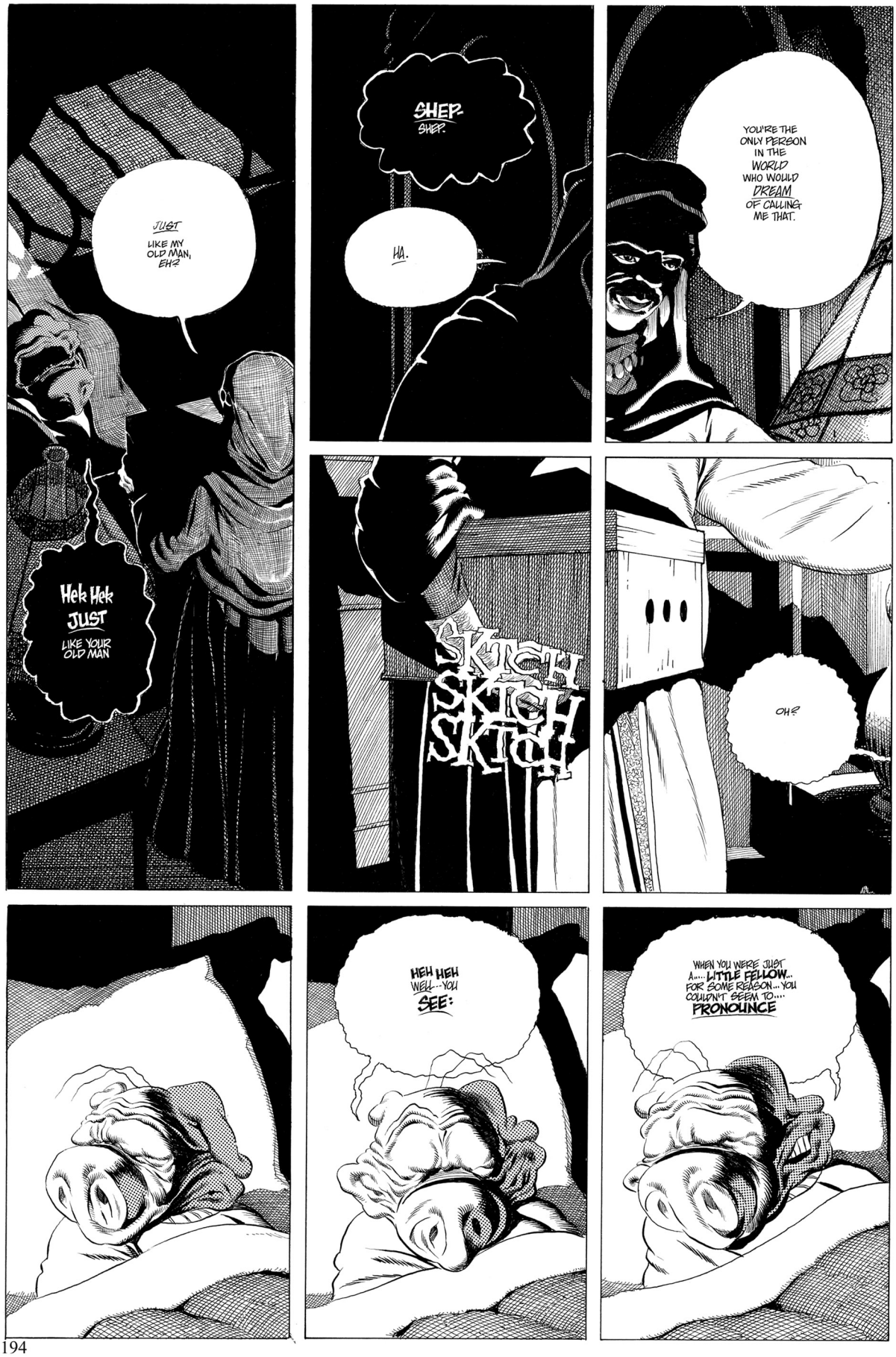

Clink-a

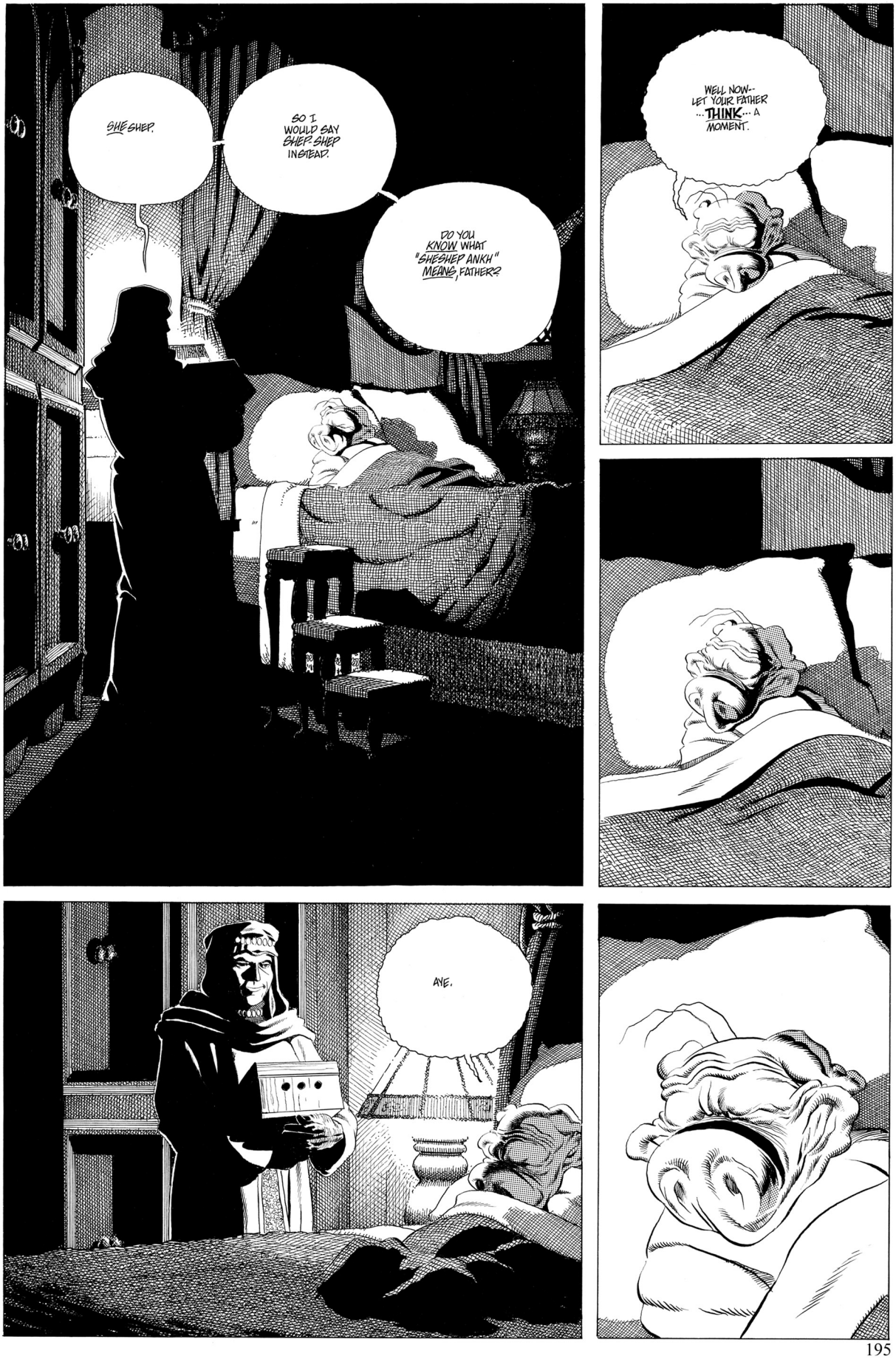

clink.


KLIK
KLAK
AH.
FINALLY.
CREEEEK
SNX
OW! CEREBUS' BACK
OW! CEREBUS'
?
WHERE...?

?
WHERE'S
WHERE'S O'VERILY?
HE'S SUPPOSED TO
SKRTCH SKTCH
?
...CHAPERONE US.
O'VERILY. HMM.
I COULD'VE SWORN HE SAID IT WAS "O'REILLY."
KLAK
I'M AFRAID I PLAYED A LITTLE GAME... OF....

"FIRST BOOK OF MOSHE, CHAPTER THREE" ON HIM.
HerHerHer
HOW MANY TIMES DOES FATHER HAVE TO TELL YOU:
"YOU MUSTN'T MAKE PEOPLE SEE SNAKES THAT AREN'T THERE"?
EVIDENTLY MORE TIMES THAN YOU ALREADY HAVE.
BECAUSE I'VE DONE IT AGAIN.
HerHerHer
INCORRIGIBLE


JUST LIKE MY OLD MAN, EH?
Hek Hek JUST LIKE YOUR OLD MAN
SHEP. SHEP.
HA.
YOU'RE THE ONLY PERSON IN THE WORLD WHO WOULD DREAM OF CALLING ME THAT.
SKETCH SKETCH SKETCH
OH?
HEH HEH WELL--YOU SEE:
WHEN YOU WERE JUST A..... LITTLE FELLOW.. FOR SOME REASON... YOU COULDN'T SEEM TO.... PRONOUNCE


SHE SHEP.
SO I WOULD SAY SHEP. SHEP INSTEAD.
DO YOU KNOW WHAT "SHESHEP ANKH" MEANS, FATHER?
WELL NOW-- LET YOUR FATHER ...THINK... A MOMENT.
AYE.

AYE. YOUR MOTHER
YOUR... MOTHER ...
FOUND IT... IN A
... BOOK SOMEWHERE
IT'S A.... HEBREW NAME... AND IT'S
MEANS
"BELOVED OF GOD"

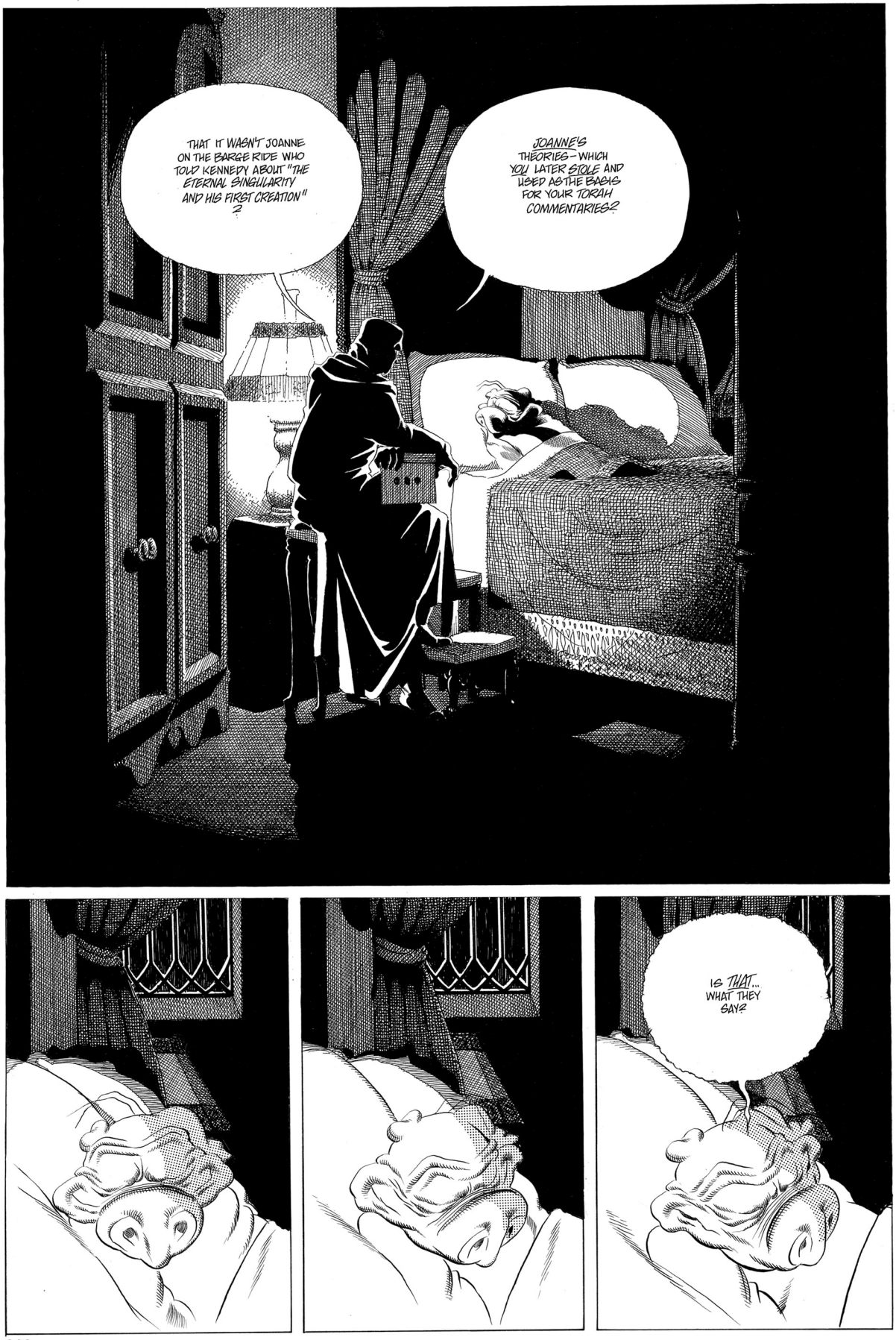
IT'S TRUE, FATHER
MOTHER DID TELL YOU THAT IT WAS HEBREW
AND THAT IT MEANT "BELOVED OF GOD"
SKTCH
SKTCH
BUT ACTUALLY.
ACTUALLY. IT'S EGYPTIAN.
AND IT MEANS "LIVING SYMBOL."
AH.

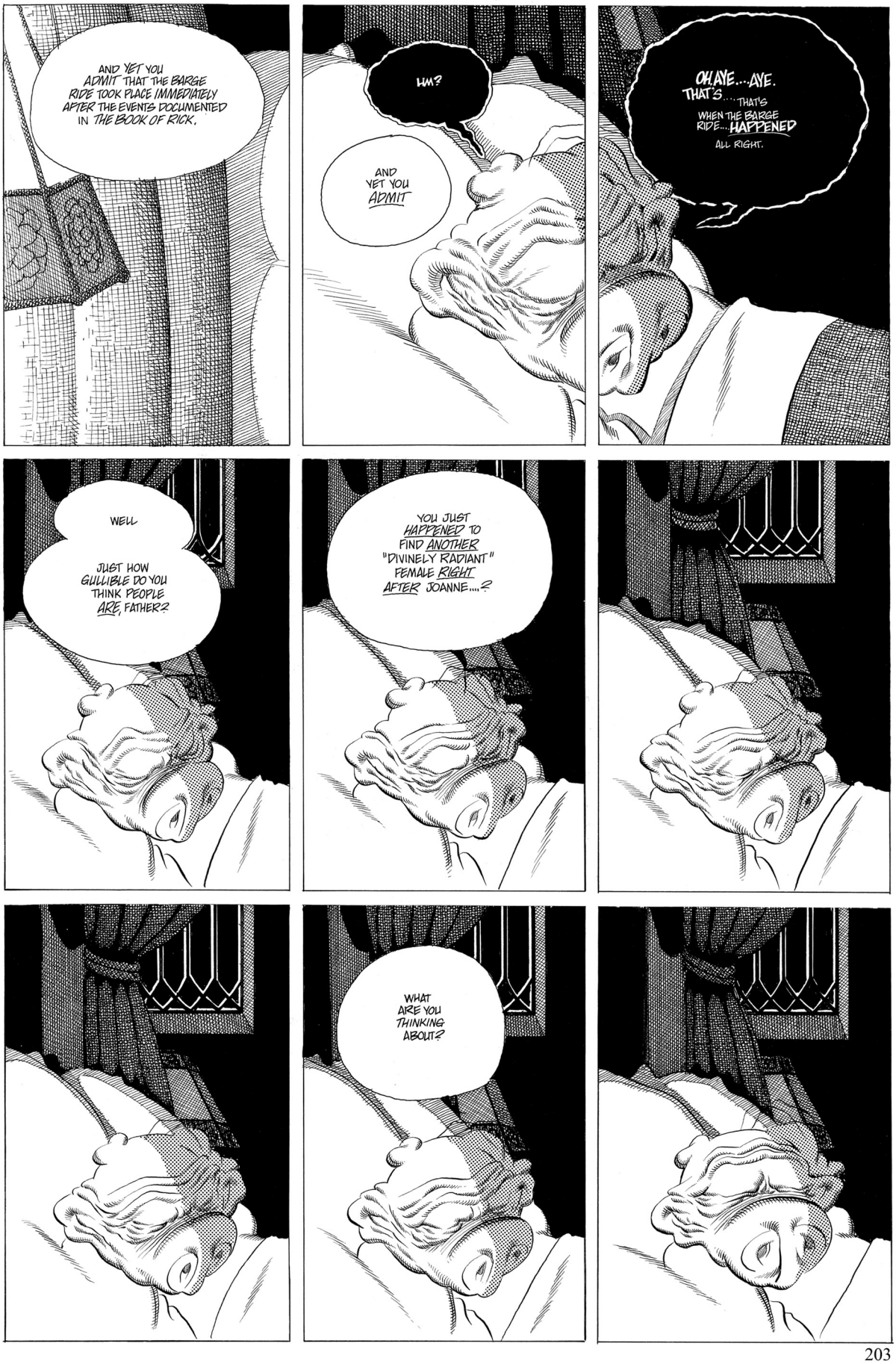
SCORE ONE...
...FOR NEW JOANNE, EH?
HEH.
YOU KNOW?
WAY BACK. IN THE BEGINNING. WHEN YOUR MOTHER AND I FIRST
GOT TOGETHER.
SHE WAS ABSOLUTELY TERRIFIED OF RESEMBLING THE FIRST JOANNE
HeRHeRHeR
ABSOLUTELY TERRIFIED.

FATHER?
IF I HAD A CROWN FOR EVERY TIME WE'VE HAD THIS CONVERSATION
I'D BE A VERY WEALTHY MAN
WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENED WAS:
WHEN YOU FIRST TOLD MOTHER THAT YOU LOVED HER, SHE HAD ONE OF HER "INSIGHTS." SHE TURNED TO YOU AND SHE SAID "IT'S BECAUSE I REMIND YOU OF JOANNE, ISN'T IT?"
AND YOU SAID, "AYE," AND THEN YOU ASKED HER, "DOES THAT BOTHER YOU?"
AND SHE SAID, "NO, NOT AT ALL. I HAVE ALWAYS FELT-SINCE I WAS A YOUNG GIRL-THAT JOANNE AND I WERE SPIRITUAL SOULMATES."

HOW IS YOUR MOTHER?
I'LL ASK YOU ONE.
SHE'S IN SPLENDID HEALTH (SORRY TO DISAPPOINT YOU). NOW:
SKRATCH
HAHAHAHA

Hek Hek Hek
SHOOT.
YOU STILL INSIST THAT THE GINEVRA CHARACTER IN F. STOP KENNEDY'S "PLEASURE'S SIMPLE LIFE"
WASN'T BASED ON JOANNE.
THAT'S RIGHT. SHE WASN'T.


THAT IT WASN'T JOANNE ON THE BARGE RIDE WHO TOLD KENNEDY ABOUT "THE ETERNAL SINGULARITY AND HIS FIRST CREATION"?
JOANNE'S THEORIES – WHICH YOU LATER STOLE AND USED AS THE BASIS FOR YOUR TORAH COMMENTARIES?
IS THAT... WHAT THEY SAY?

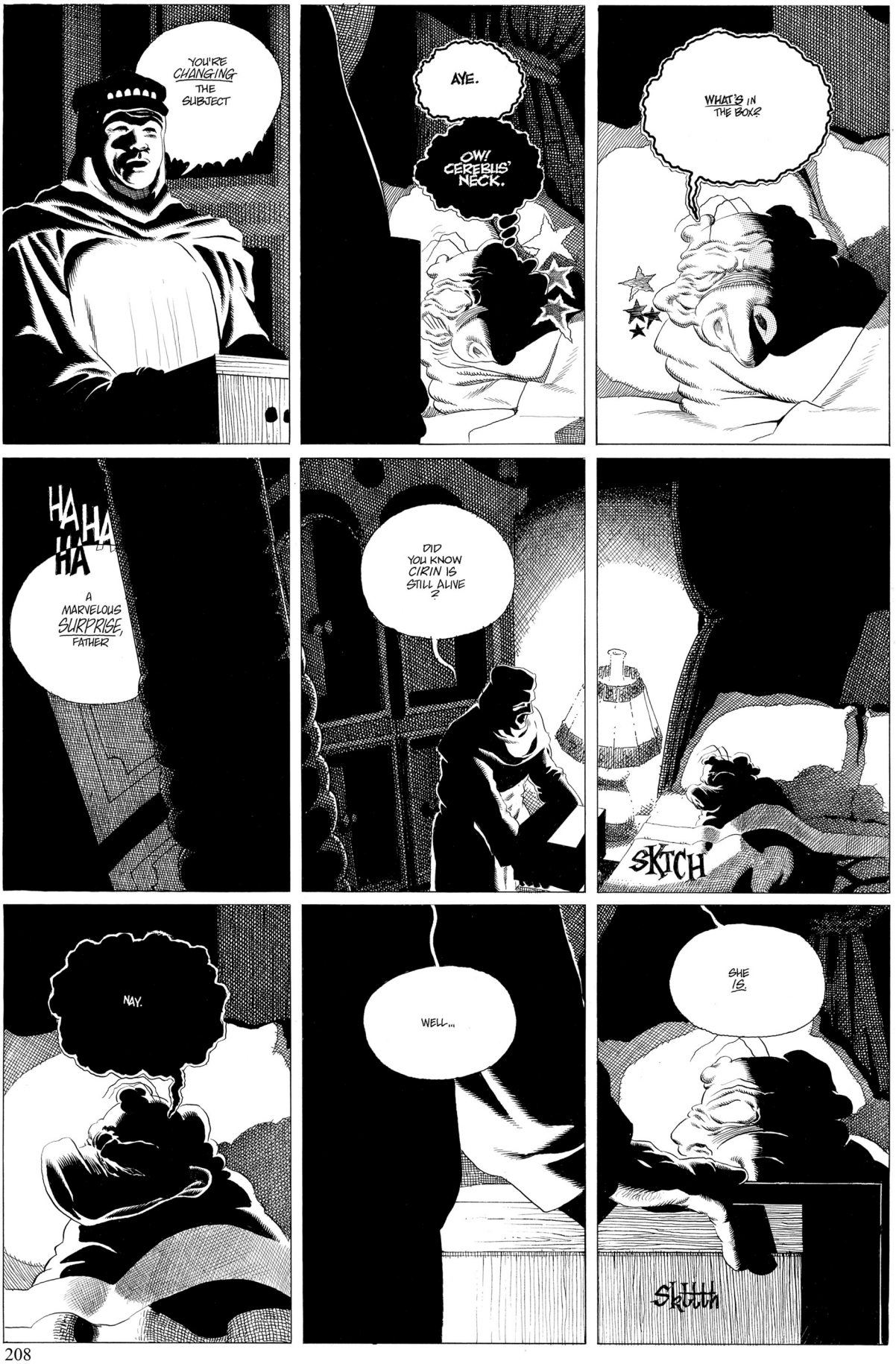

AND YET YOU ADMIT THAT THE BARGE RIDE TOOK PLACE IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE EVENTS DOCUMENTED IN THE BOOK OF RICK.
HM?
AND YET YOU ADMIT
OH. AYE... AYE. THAT'S... THAT'S WHEN THE BARGE RIDE... HAPPENED ALL RIGHT.
WELL
JUST HOW GULLIBLE DO YOU THINK PEOPLE ARE, FATHER?
YOU JUST HAPPENED TO FIND ANOTHER "DIVINELY RADIANT" FEMALE RIGHT AFTER JOANNE...?
WHAT ARE YOU THINKING ABOUT?

JUST REMEMBERING ALL OF THOSE GREAT FISHING TRIPS WE TOOK TOGETHER...
YOU KNOW... THOSE WERE THE HAPPIEST
HAHA HAHAHA
"ALL" THOSE GREAT FISHING TRIPS?
HAHA HAHA
YOU MEAN
"ALL" BOTH OF THEM?
HA HA HA
SKRTCH SKRTCH
THERE WERE ONLY TWO OF THEM, FATHER. ONE WHEN I WAS TWELVE AND THE OTHER WHEN I WAS TWENTY. GOD.
HOW I REMEMBER THEM BOTH... STUCK OUT IN THE MIDDLE OF THE WOODS...
DRINKING THAT WRETCHED SOUR BEER (WHATEVER IT WAS CALLED)
NOTHING TO DO BUT LISTEN TO YOUR "HAM" AND "MOOSE" ANECDOTES HOUR AFTER HOUR

AS I TOLD MOTHER AFTER THE SECOND ONE:
"I BELIEVE I HAVE FOUND THE SECRET TO IMMORTALITY..."
"MY FATHER'S FISHING TRIPS"
"YOU DON'T ACTUALLY LIVE FOR ALL ETERNITY"
"BUT IT SURE FEELS LIKE IT"
SHE THOUGHT THAT WAS HYSTERICAL.

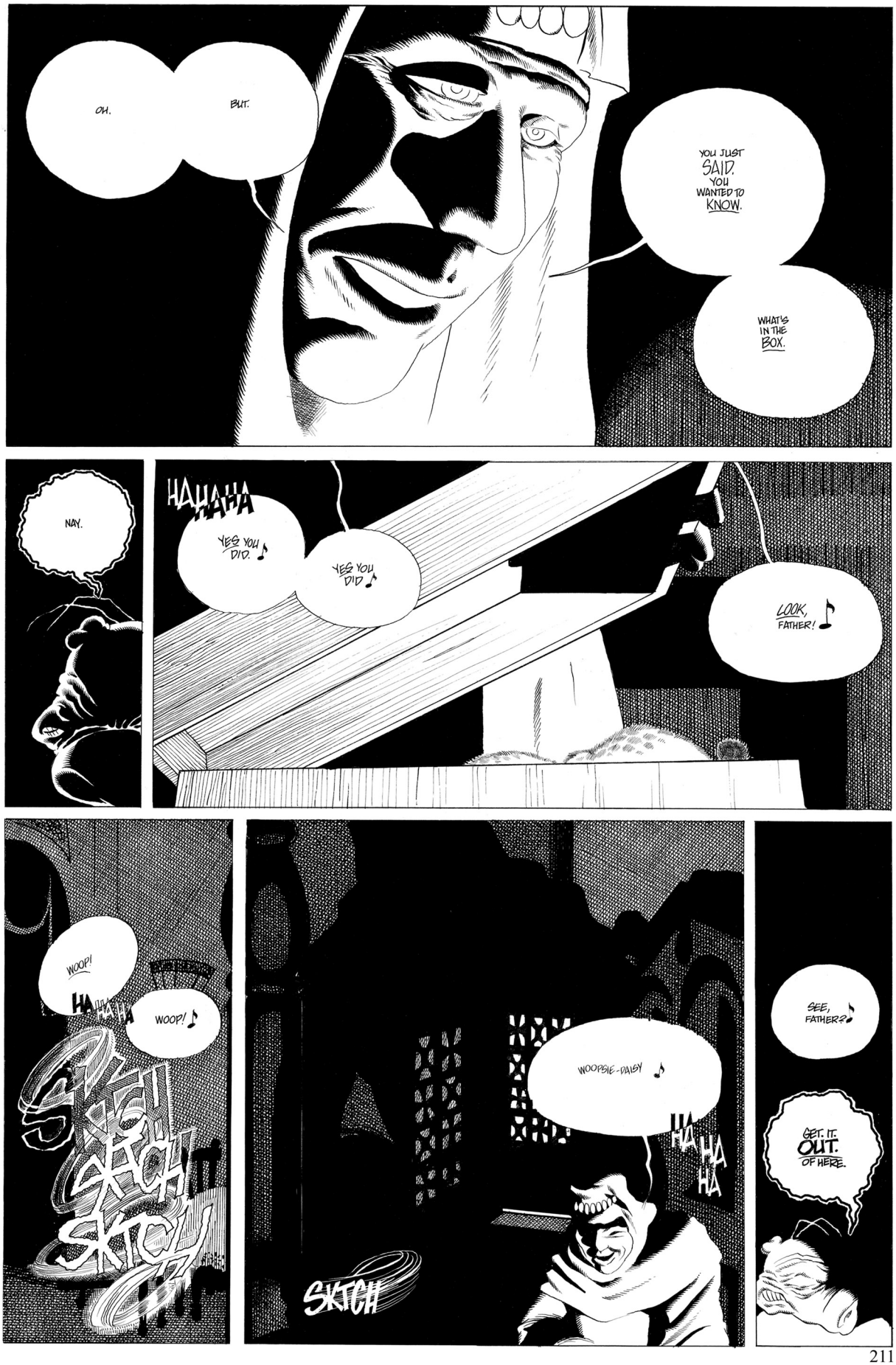
SHE.
WOULD.
WHY DID YOU DO IT, FATHER?
DO WHAT?
WHY DID YOU TELL MOTHER THAT YOU HAD TO GUESS AT THE "WORD OF TRUTH"?
"KUMQUAT" AND....
"SHOELACES"
AND...
FLUMP

NOT.
THIS.
AGAIN.
BUT-- IT JUST DOESN'T MAKE ANY SENSE. THE WISE FELLOWS HAD BEEN DEAD AND BURIED FOR YEARS AT THAT POINT.
YOU WERE THE ONLY ONE STILL ALIVE
WHO KNEW THE TRUTH.
SKETCH
YOUR FATHER
PROMISED
...YOUR MOTHER...
...HE WOULD NEVER... LIE... TO HER
...ABOUT ANYTHING...
BUT-- THE "WORD OF TRUTH." YOU MUST'VE KNOWN THE ENTIRE CEREBITE FAITH WAS BASED ON THE "WORD OF
SHEP-SHEP.
SHE-SHEP.
(SORRY)
SHE-SHEP.
WHAT'S IN THE BOX?

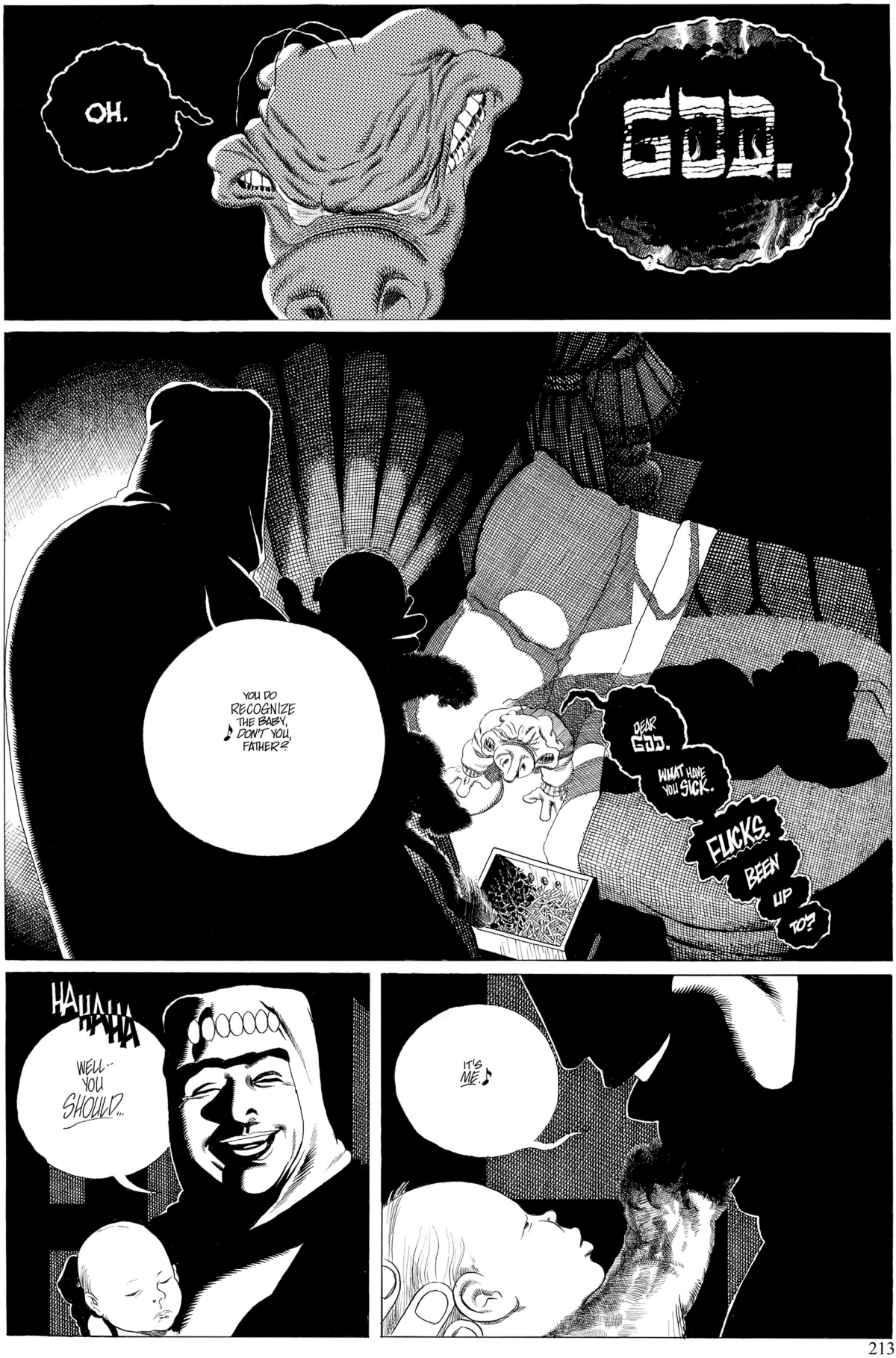

YOU'RE CHANGING THE SUBJECT
AYE.
OW! CEREBUS' NECK.
WHAT'S IN THE BOX?
HA HA HA
A MARVELOUS SURPRISE, FATHER
DID YOU KNOW CIRIN IS STILL ALIVE?
SKTCH
NAY.
WELL...
SHE IS.
Skuttth

SHE'S IN EVEN WORSE SHAPE THAN YOU
IF YOU CAN BELIEVE IT
MOTHER'S PEOPLE HAVE BEEN CAREFULLY PRYING
HER SECRETS OUT OF HER. ONE.
BY ONE.
SKETCH
HUNH.
BETTER YOU SHOULD JUST LET HER GO TO HER GRAVE WITH ALL HER CIRINIST GARBAGE LOCKED UP INSIDE HER
OH, BUT WAIT 'TIL YOU HEAR, FATHER
HER PLANT EXPERIMENTS ?

TAKING PLANTS APART AND THEN PUTTING THEM BACK TOGETHER?
WITH OTHER PLANTS?
AYE.
SICK
CIRINIST.
GARBAGE.
HA HA HA HA
YOU'LL NEVER GUESS, FATHER.
SHE FOUND A WAY TO MAKE IT WORK WITH ANIMAL LIFE ...
SKTCH
...TOO.
THAT'S ENOUGH.
SKTCH


OH.
BUT.
YOU JUST SAID, YOU WANTED TO KNOW.
WHAT'S IN THE BOX.
NAY.
HAHAHA
YES YOU DID ♪
YES YOU DID ♪
LOOK, FATHER! ♪
WOOP!
HA HA HA HA
WOOP! ♪
SKETCH
WOOPSIE-DAISY ♪
HA HA HA
SKETCH
SEE, FATHER? ♪
GET IT OUT OF HERE.

NONONO. LOOK, FATHER. SEE? ♪
IT'S A LION'S CUB. ♪
WITH A BABY'S HEAD. ♪
♪ISN'T THAT AMAZING?♪
OH GOD.
OH. GOD.


OH.
GOD.
YOU DO RECOGNIZE THE BABY, ♪ DON'T YOU, FATHER?
DEAR GOD.
WHAT HAVE YOU SICK.
FUCKS.
BEEN UP TO?
HAHAHA
WELL.. YOU SHOULD..
IT'S ME.♪

WE'VE GOT SIX OF THEM NOW.
MOTHER SAYS
JUST AS SOON AS WE CAN GET ONE OF THEM TO LIVE PAST THE AGE OF THREE
WE'RE GOING BACK DOWN INTO EGYPT
NEW JOANNE
AND NEW SHESHEP ANKH.
OR
IF YOU PREFER
THE NEW ASENATH AND THE NEW ZAPHNATH PANEAH
FIRST BOOK OF MOSHE
CHAPTER FORTY-ONE

VERSE?
FORTY-FIVE
YOU DO KNOW YOUR SCRIPTURE, FATHER.
JOSEPH AND HIS ...?
AND HIS EGYPTIAN WHORE
HA HA HA HA HA HA
CAN'T YOU JUST IMAGINE WHAT I'LL LOOK LIKE WHEN I'M FULLY GROWN?
ONCE MOTHER'S PEOPLE HAVE FIGURED OUT THE CRAFT BEHIND GIANTISM?
I'LL LOOK.
LIKE

THIS!
NO, FATHER. IT'S NOT AN EXAGGERATION.
MOTHER SAYS
AS SOON AS HER PEOPLE DISCOVER THE CRAFT BEHIND GIANTISM
THEY WILL BE ABLE TO MAKE ME FORTY FEET TALL
OR TALLER!

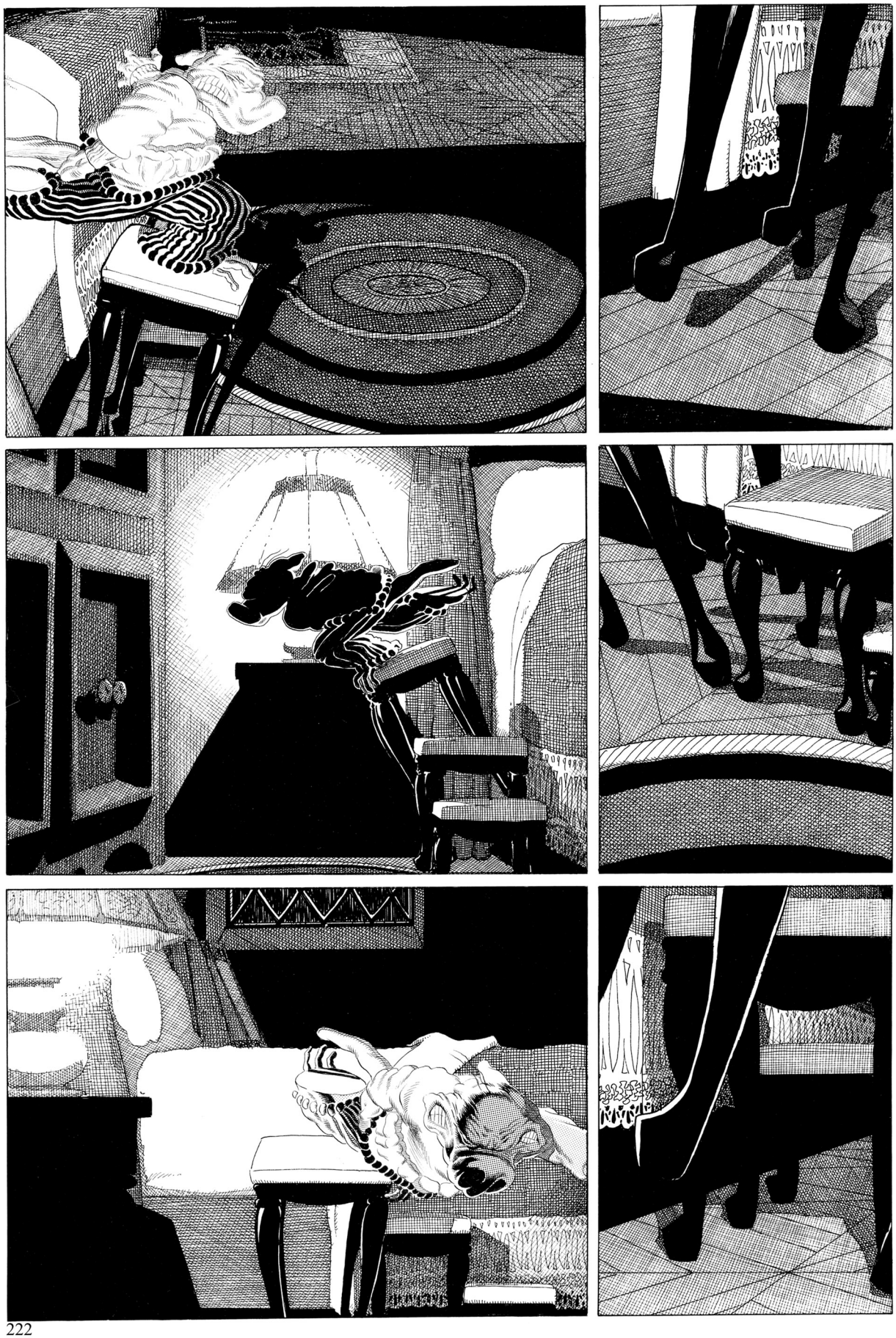
I'LL BE WORSHIPPED, FATHER.
WORSHIPPED AS A GOD!
HARMACLUS!
THE EGYPTIAN GOD OF MORNING!

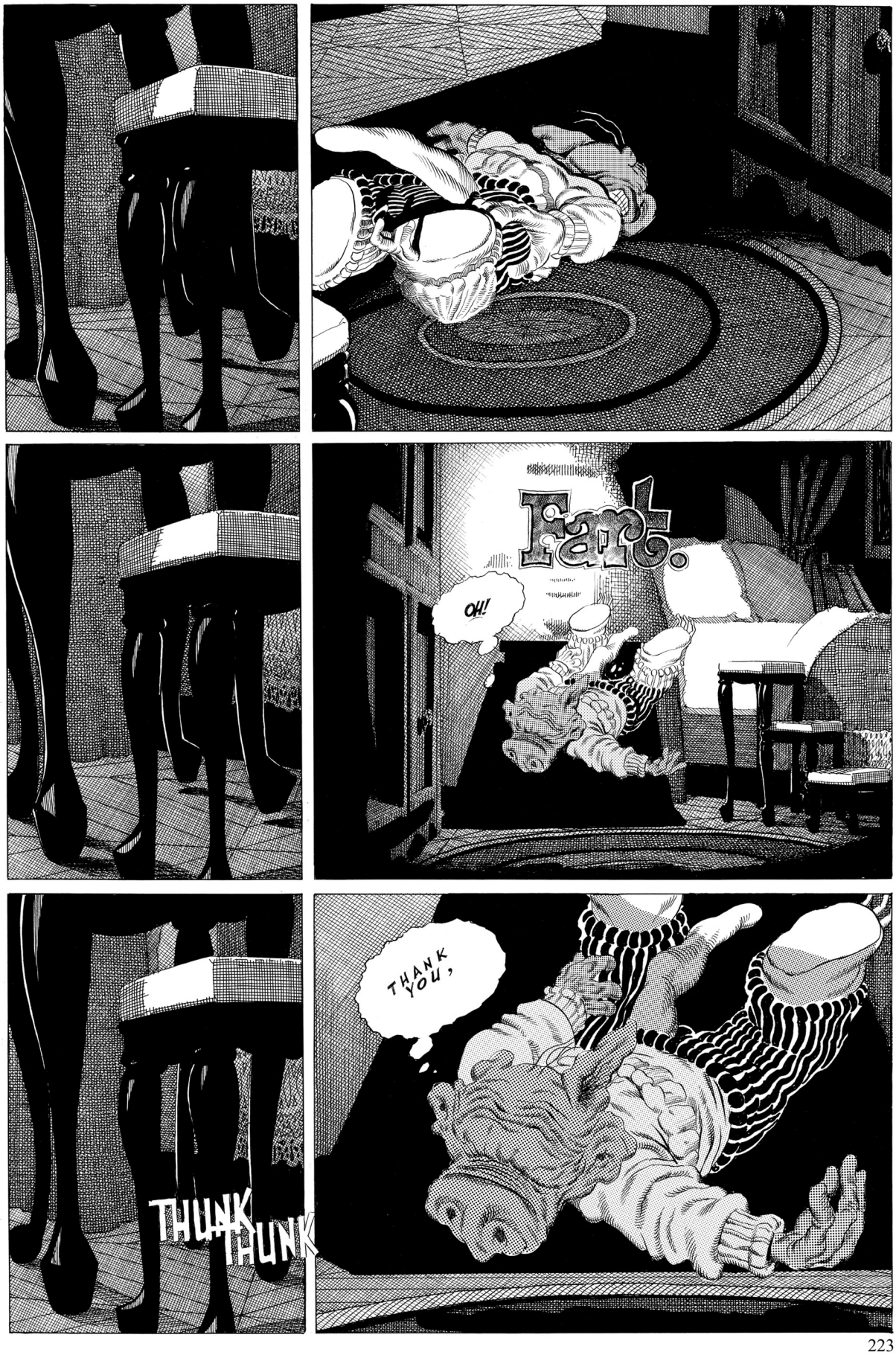
BUT....
BUT IT WON'T
BE.
YOU.
IT'LL BE THAT--- THAT... THING!
ITS HEAD WAS GROWN FROM PIECES OF MY BRAIN TISSUE, FATHER. IT.
WANAW
IS! ..... ME!
TALK SENSE, BOY!
ARE YOU INSIDE IT?
ARE YOU? CAN YOU FEEL YOUR HANDS HOLDING YOU UP ?
I
CAN YOU?
AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA

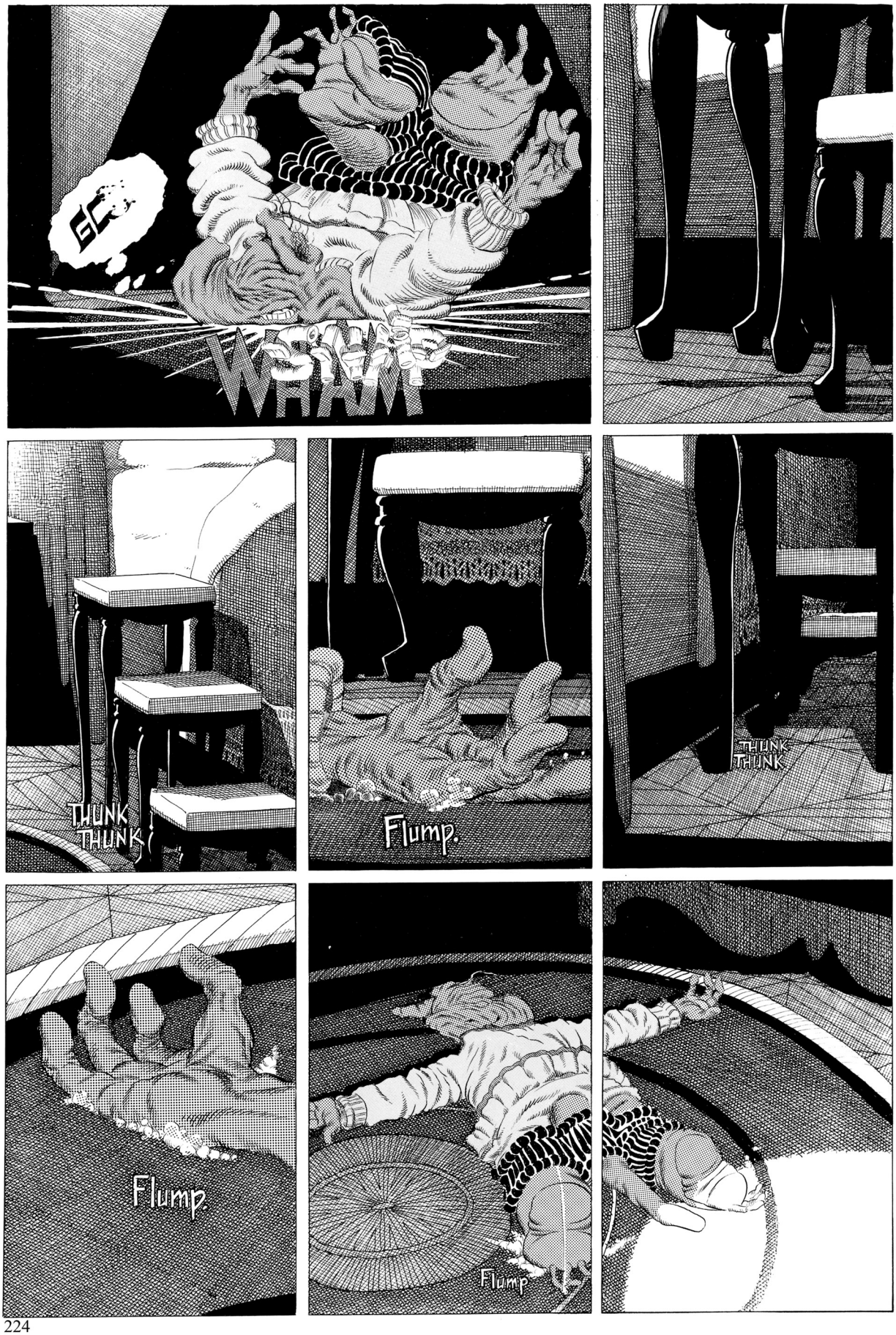
I MIGHT'VE KNOWN YOU WOULDN'T UNDERSTAND
WAAAHA
Thump
WELL, FINE! FINE!
I HOPE YOU AND O'REILLY AND THE SCATTERED REMNANTS OF YOUR FOLLOWERS ENJOY THE LIMITED TIME WHICH REMAINS TO YOU...
SKITCH SKITCH SKITCH SKITCH
...BECAUSE THERE'S A SURPRISE ON THE WAY, FATHER-- A VERY, VERY BIG SURPRISE! TENS OF THOUSANDS OF SURPRISES IN POINT OF FACT!
THUMP
WAAAAAAAAA
A NEW GROUP OF BELIEVERS, FATHER...
...CALLED...
MUSLIMS!
AND FROM WHAT I UNDERSTAND?
AAAAA
SKITCH SKITCH
THEY'VE TAKEN A DECIDEDLY DIM VIEW
WAAAA
SKITCH SKITCHSKITCH
STOMP. STOMP. STOMP.
AAAA
OF WHAT YOU'VE DONE WITH THEIR GOD.
SKITCH SKITCH
GOOD. BYE FATHER
SLAM!
WAAAAAAA
SKITCHSKITCH

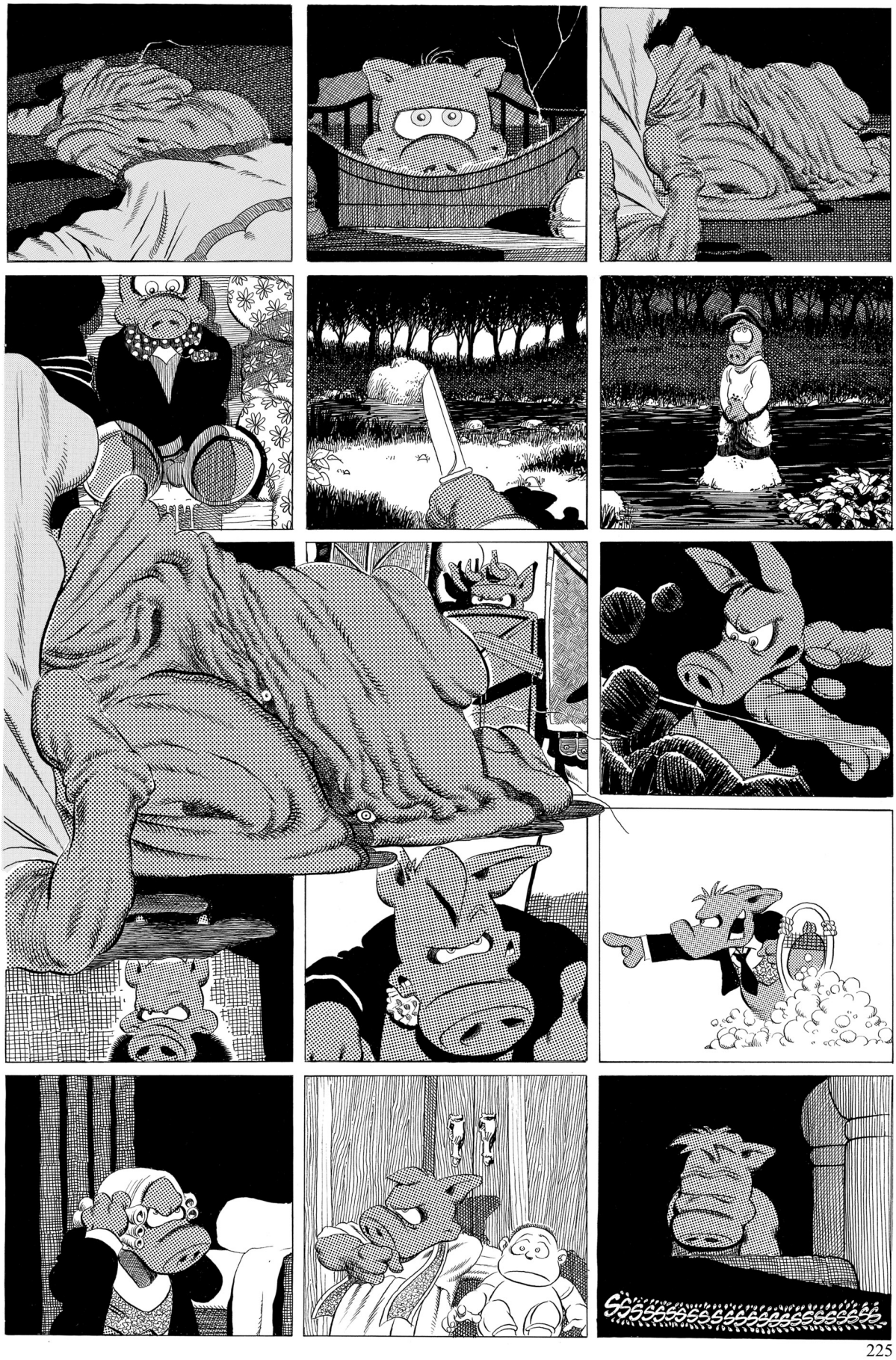
SHEP-SHEP!
SHEP-SHEP!
SHEP-SHEP!
WHERE IS IT?
WHERE... IS... IT?
SHNT SHNT
IF THOSE IDIOT HOUSEKEEPERS HAVE!
AH!
CRINK
CRINKCRINKCRINK
FLUMP
SHEP-SHEP!
BYYY GUM! CEREBUS IS GOING TO KILL HIM!
OW CEREBUS' SHOULDER!
OW CEREBUS' ELBOW!
OW CEREBUS' WRIST!
BYYYY GUM! CEREBUS IS GOING TO KILL BOTH OF THEM!

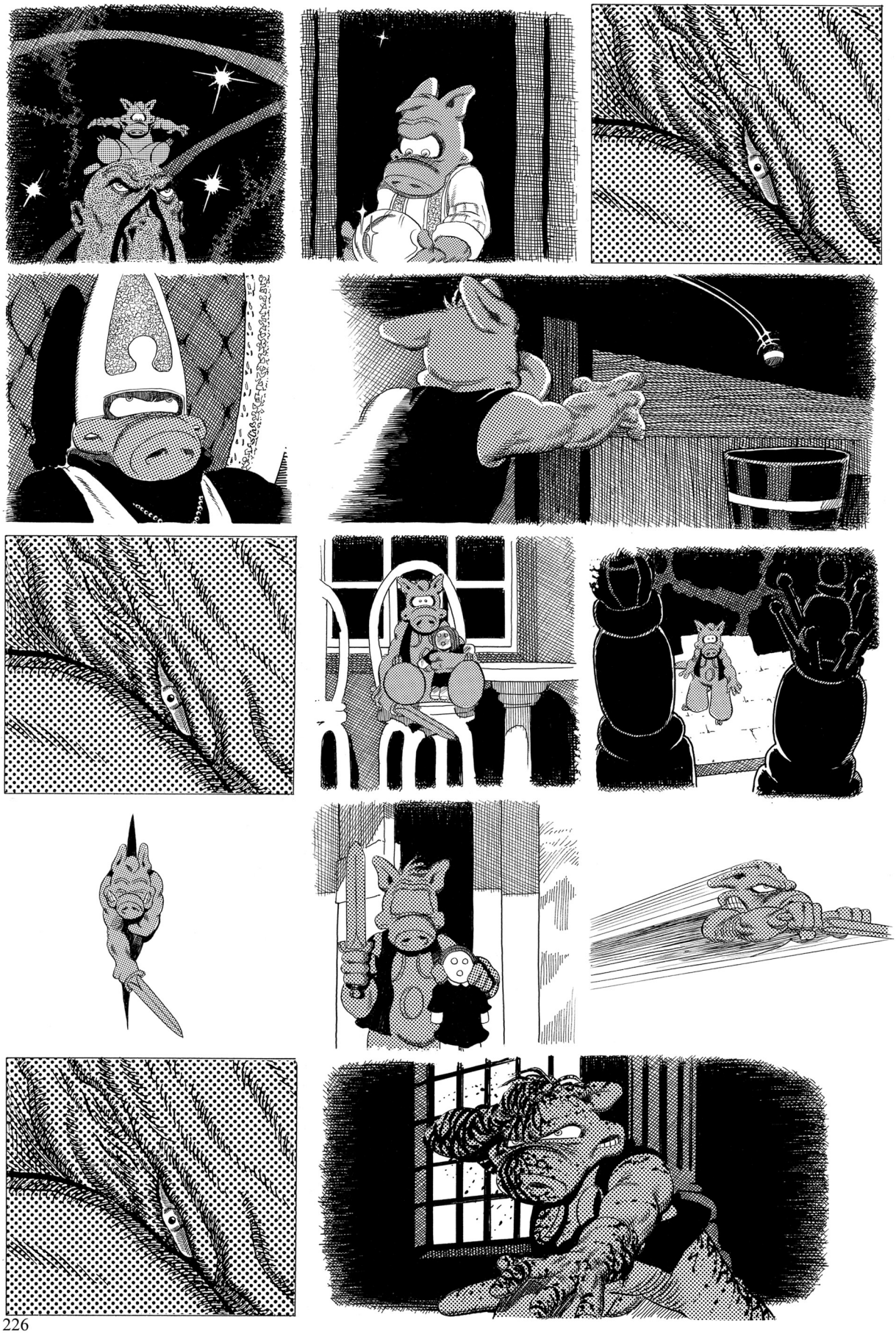
NAY.
CEREBUS WILL DISMEMBER THEM FIRST!
THEN CEREBUS WILL
TUNG
...OW...
...CEREBUS'...
...HAMSTRING...

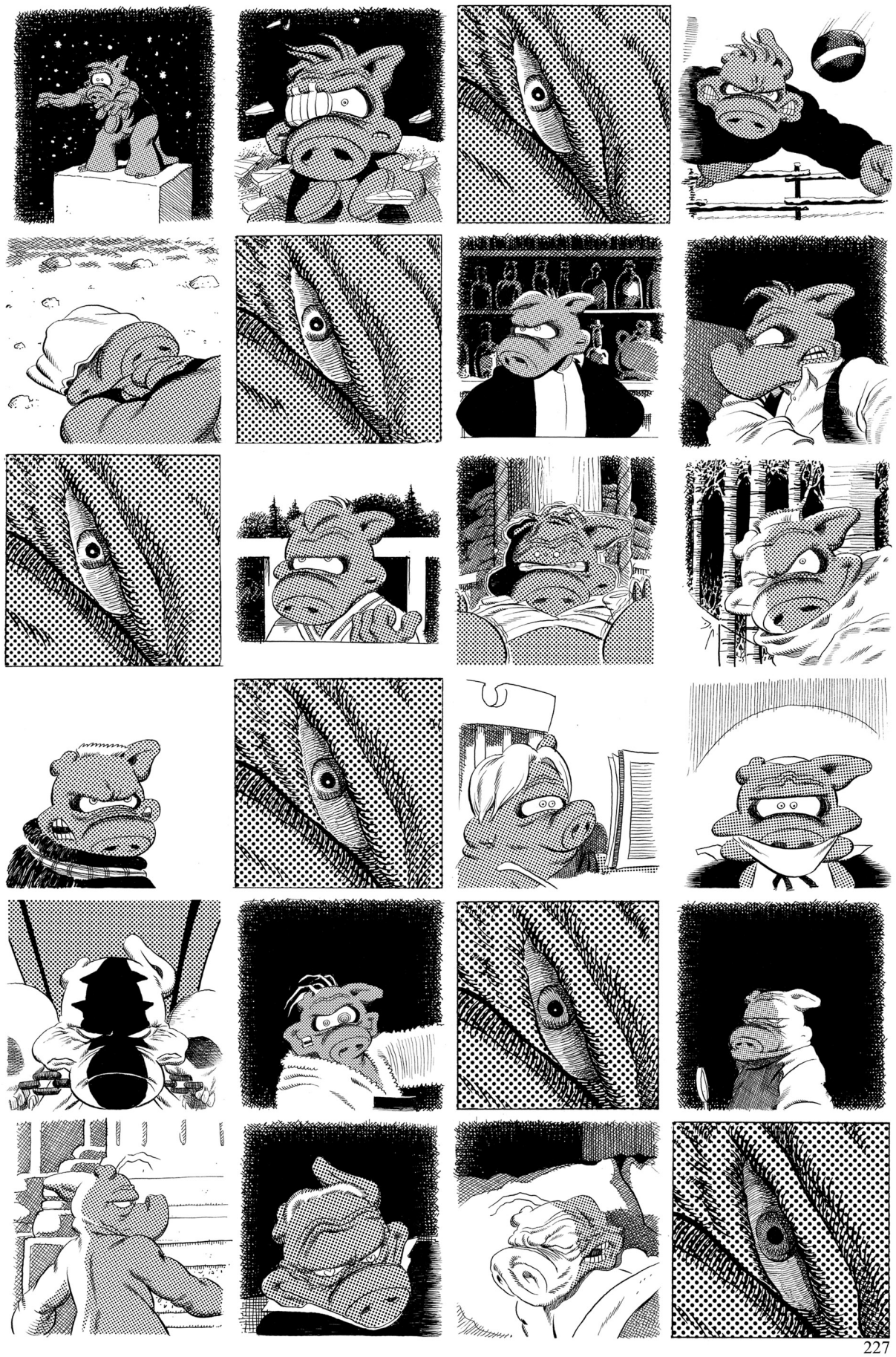


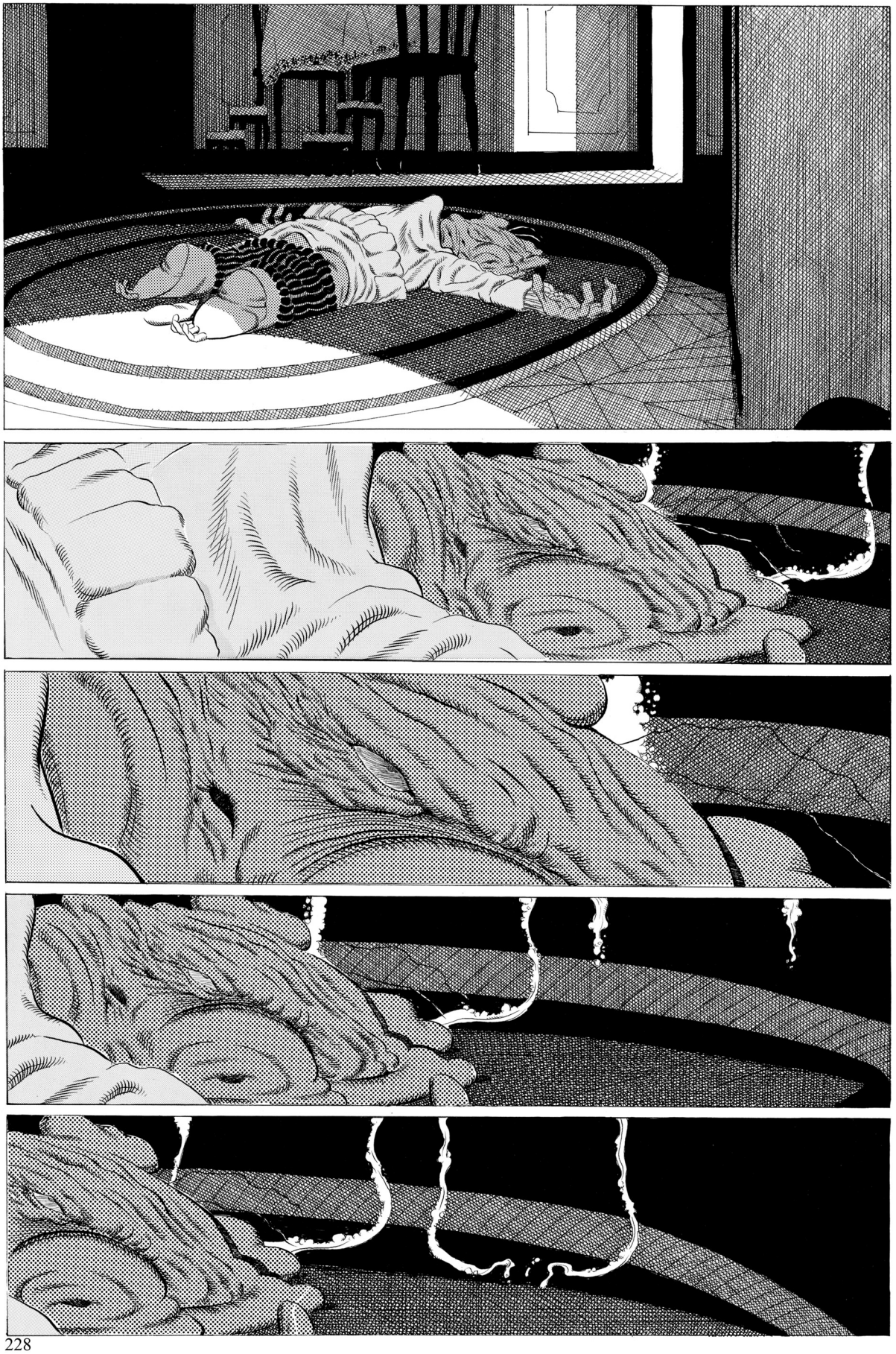

Fart.
OH!
THANK YOU,
THUNK
THUNK

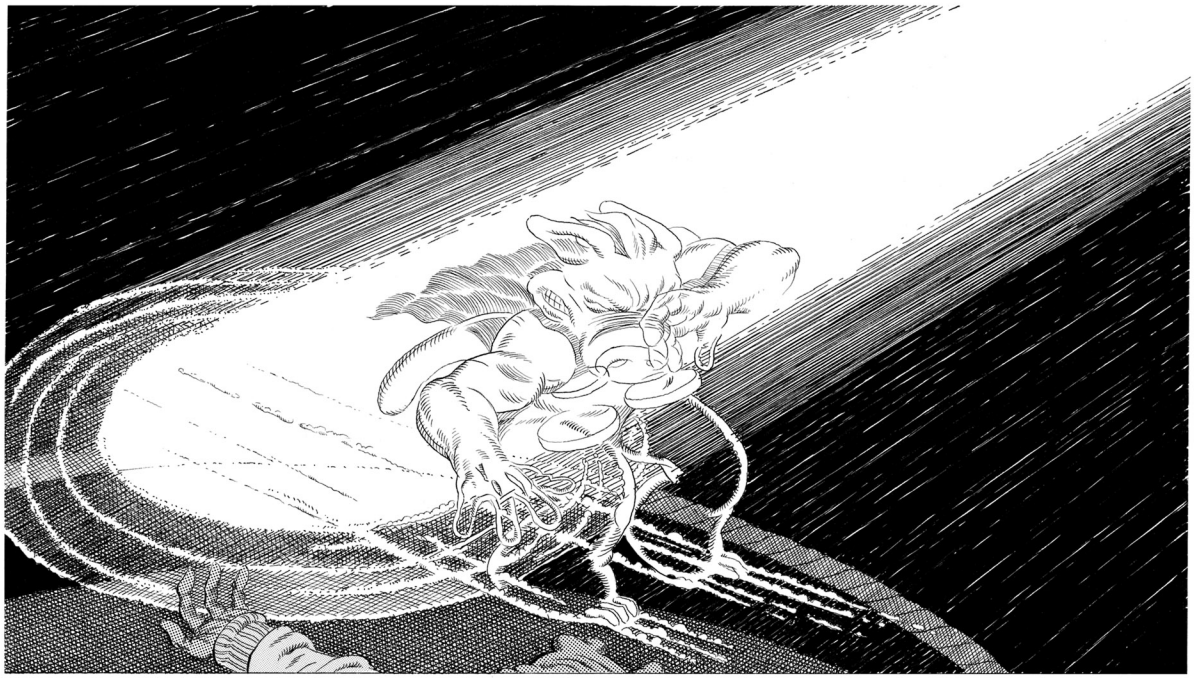

GC
WHAM
THUNK
THUNK
Flump.
THUNK
THUNK
Flump.
Flump

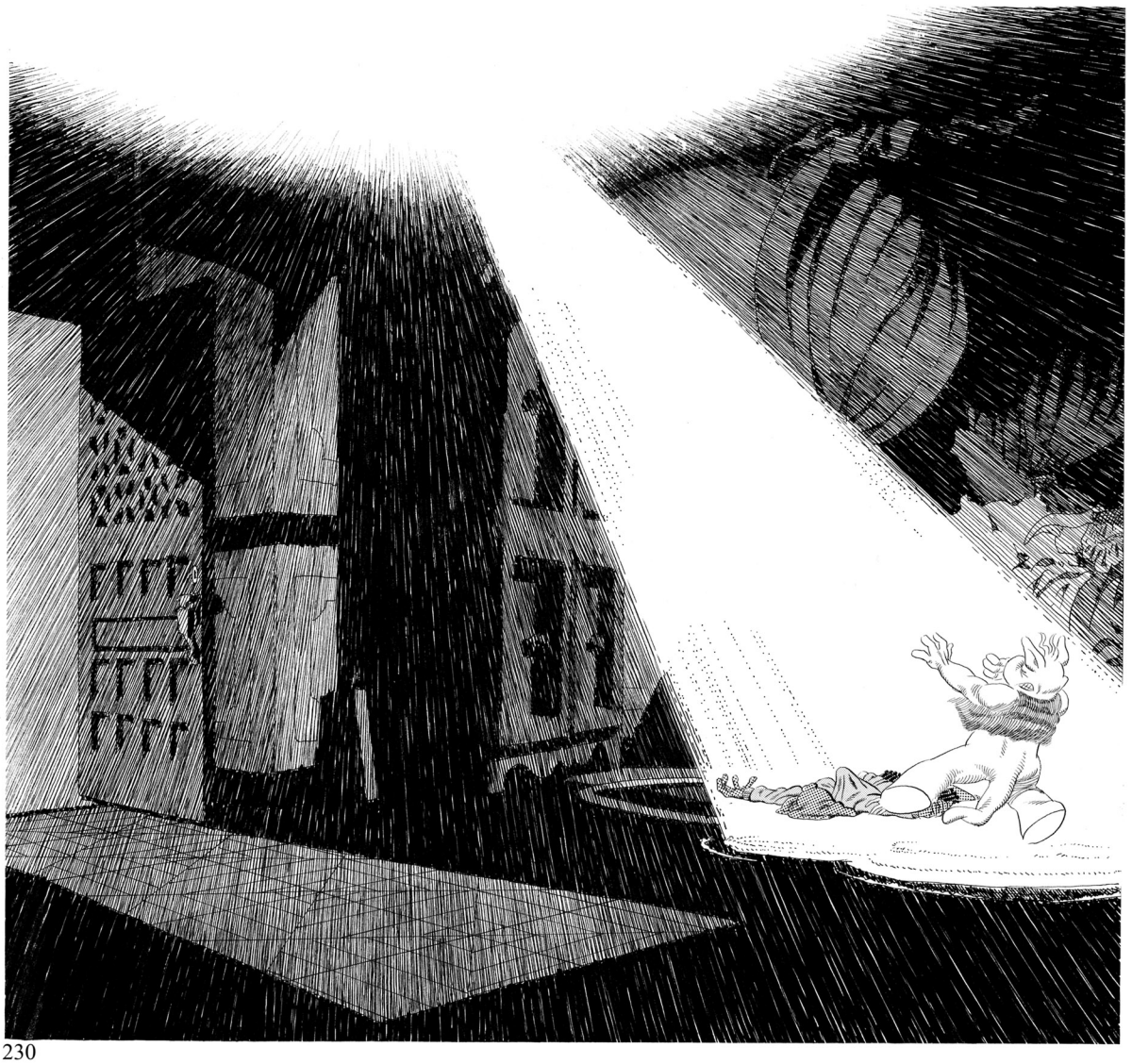

SSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSS

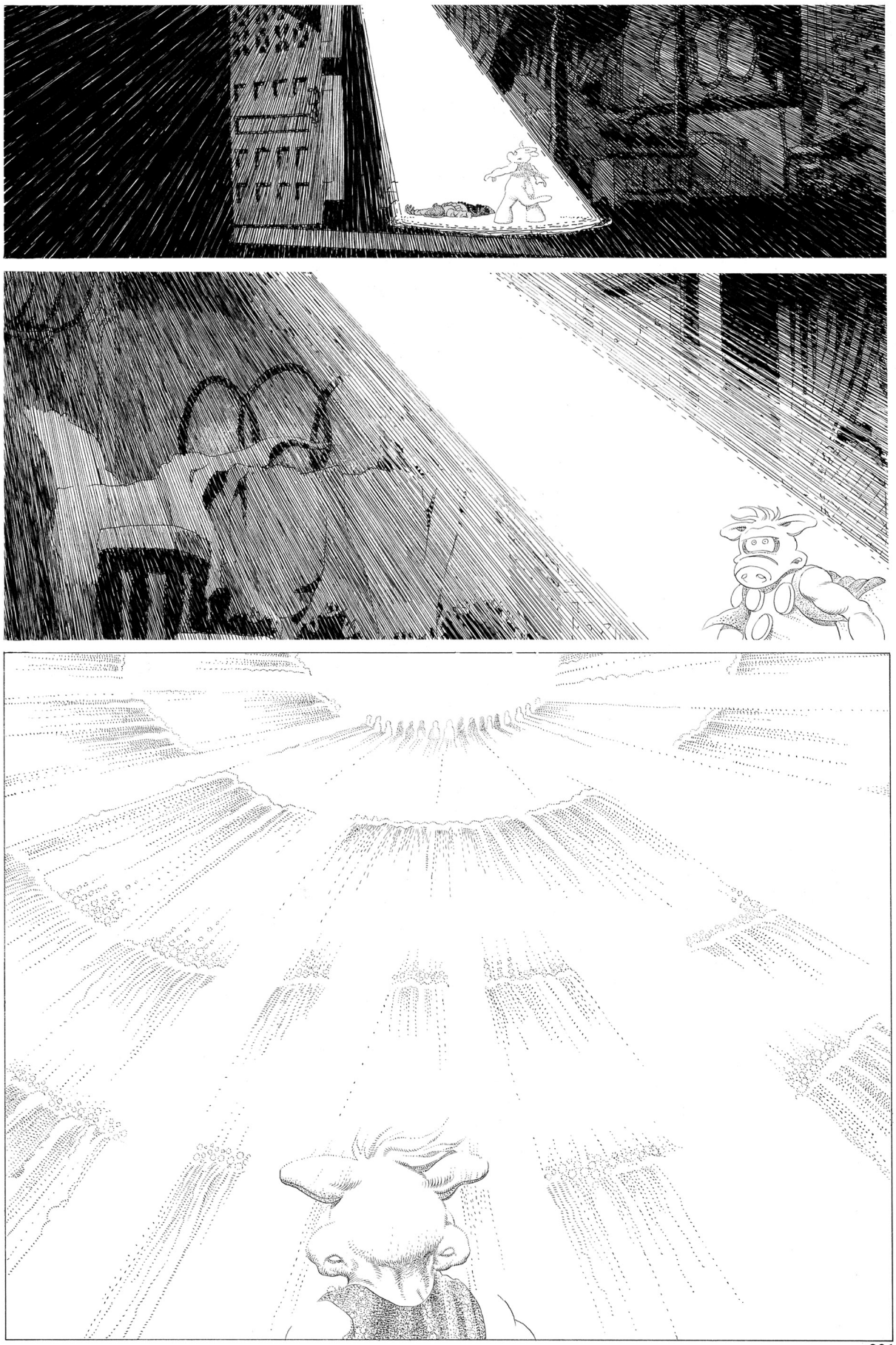




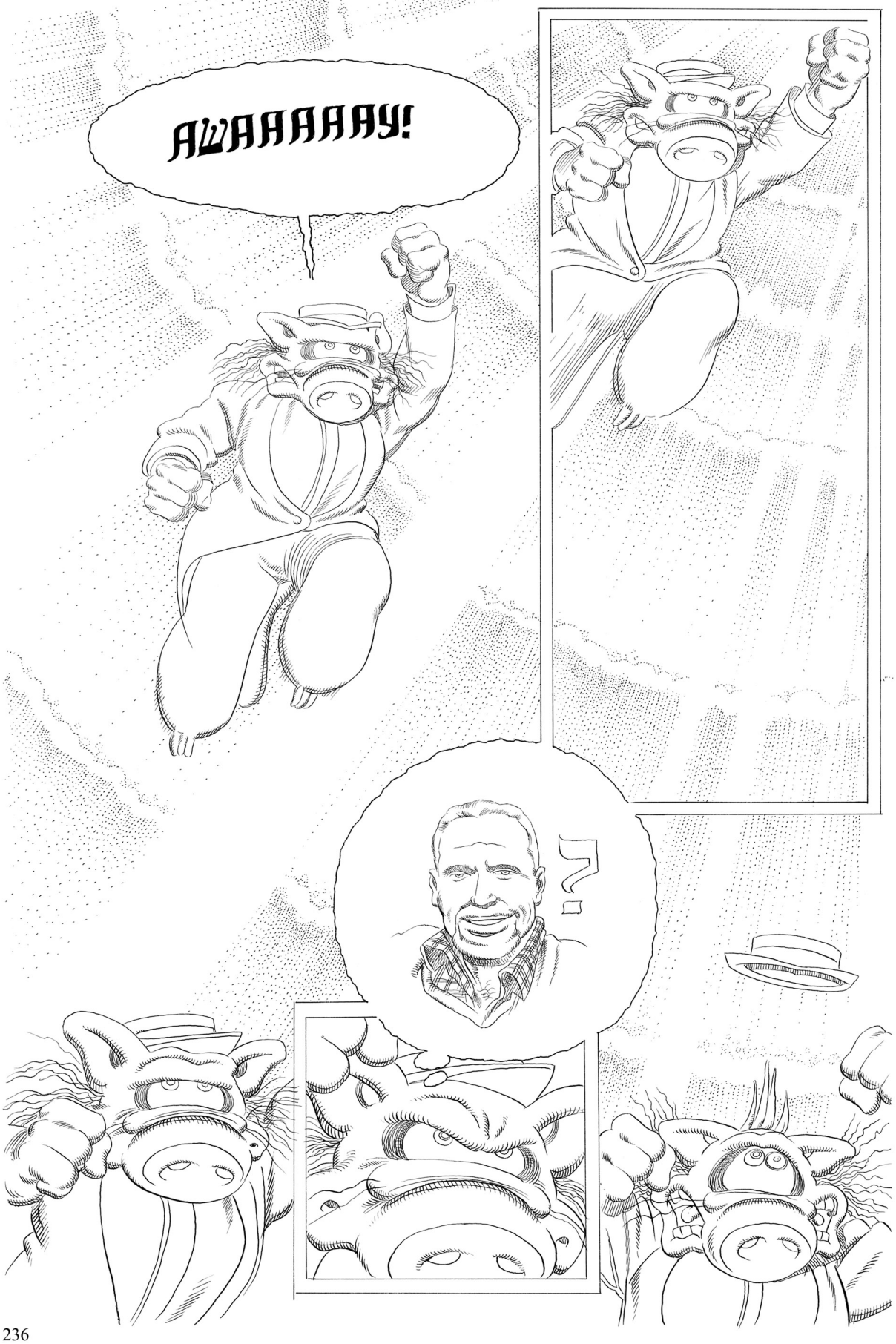






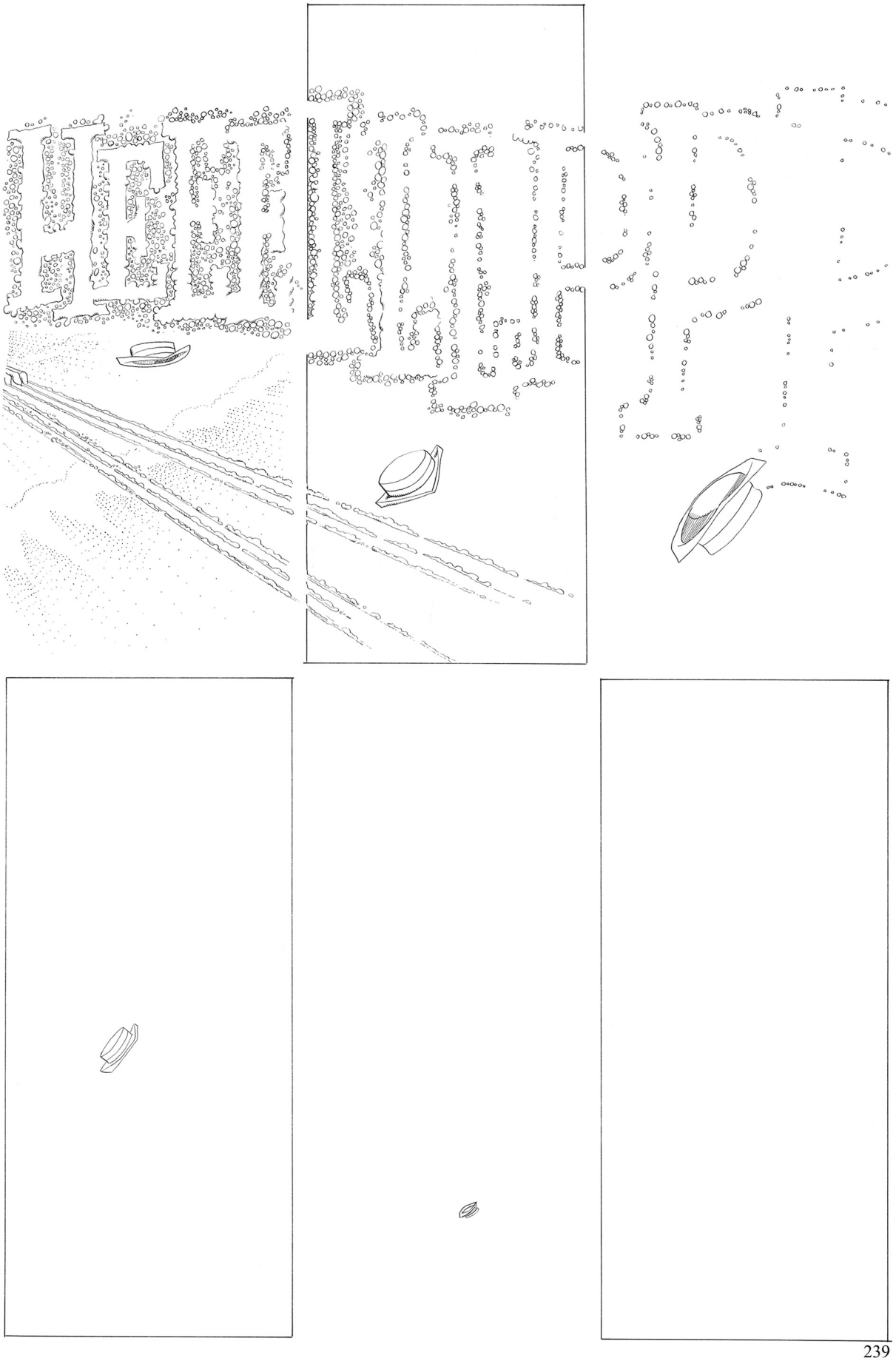


WAP
WAP
WAP
THOIT
DOING
DOING
DOING
WINK
STUFF
STUFF
RABH!
RABBI!


AWAAAAAY!
?

ERT
ERT
ERT
ERT
ERT
(PSST.)
(GOD)
(HELP)

HELP, GOD! THE LIGHT! THE LIGHT!
HELP, GOD! THE LIGHT HAS GOT CEREBUS!
TRIP
OOMPH
GOD!



"And if I have done well, and as is fitting the story, it is that which I desired: but if slenderly and meanly, it is that which I could attaine vnto. For as it is hurtfull to drinke wine, or water alone; & as wine mingled with water is pleasant and delighteth the taste: euen so speech finely framed, delighteth the eares of them that read the storie. And heere shall be an end."

II Maccabees 15:38-39

The Last Annotations

The Prologue

Page 1-40 - I started working on *The Last Day* late in 2002, with thirty to forty days of lead time in hand that I had painstakingly built up over the course of seven years or so. As a result, I didn't have nearly as much time for the required research that most people would consider even minimally necessary in examining areas of science that were completely foreign to me—apart from a residual "1960s astronomy fan's knowledge" of our Solar System (I considered myself fortunate to have grown up in a time period where exponential improvements in optical sciences and exploratory satellites were decimating previously-held "truths"—such as the number of moons orbiting Jupiter and Saturn—which, for a few years, at the peak of my interest, seemed to change on almost a monthly basis).

On the other hand, from my reading of the Bible, I had a pretty good idea of what it was that I was looking for—starting with my foundational supposition that "God's Spirit moving on the face of the waters" (Genesis 1:2) was orbital and was represented a) in microcosm by the orbiting of the single electron around the nucleus in the hydrogen atom and b) in macrocosm by the birth of stars which were, in turn c) metaphorical aftershock events mirroring the Big Bang in microcosm. However, being the next thing to a complete novice, I just didn't know where I was going to find the support for my thesis (it is one of those great hallmarks of faith in God that it wasn't until I was bouncing around the computerized card file at the Kitchener Public Library—trying such non-linear subjects as "Stars, birth of"—that it even occurred to me to wonder what I was going to do if the facts *didn't* support my thesis, given that I had twenty-six years of writing and drawing on the line).

I didn't even know—although I'm sure I had known at one time—that there was a word for the branch of science in which I was about to immerse myself: Cosmology. However, once I had that subject heading, I figured Stephen Hawking's writings (his name, naturally, dominated the entry) would be my best bet.

(My interest in things astronomical had lapsed by then but, like everyone else, I had heard of *A Brief History of Time,* Prof. Hawking's tell-all exposé of the Origin of Everything. Of course I also remembered seeing a copy of it at the time it was first published and thinking that it didn't look particularly "Brief" to me. Fortunately, the Kitchener Library's copy had been checked out at the time and I had to settle, instead, for a book of Prof. Hawking's essays which—being as they were adapted from a lecture series mounted at the time of *Brief History*'s explosive appearance on the bestseller lists—might have had an even brisker sale than I'm sure it already had if the publishers had had the chutzpah and/or wit to entitle it *The Brief History of Time Digest* or *An Even Briefer History of Time Using Much Smaller Words.* At one point, early in the book, Prof. Hawking asserted "I know what the Universe is doing, I just don't know why it's doing it." I wrote this down, attributed, in my notes. I then added, "If you can tell me *what* the Universe is doing, I think I can tell you why it's doing it.")

It was the most frustrating part of my research, as it turned out, because that was all I really wanted to know: *what* the Universe was doing. But that tends not to conform to correct scientific journalistic methods which I discovered consist of a) one part imparting of factual observations and b) nine parts enunciating proofs of the *validity* of those factual observations. I kept wanting to yell at the books, "I believe you, I believe you. If you say you've proved it, I have no reason to doubt you. *Just tell me what the Universe is doing*." It seemed to be a rule of thumb that the closer Prof. Hawking or the other authors came to actually telling me what the Universe was doing, the greater the likelihood that they were about to go off on a five-page tangent explaining the history of the initial theories, who came up with them, who first refuted them, how many people then had had a kick at the can, who got it right, who got it wrong, how they got it wrong, what conference they got it wrong at, what conference they got it right at.

So there I sat in the Off-White House library, attempting to speed-read scientific texts. Which, if you aren't science-minded (which I'm certainly not) is really kind of difficult.

Did you understand that? I would ask myself, having laboriously ploughed through a singularly obtuse paragraph.

Of course, I would reply.

Am I lying? I would ask myself.

Of course, I would reply.

And then I would have to backtrack, as I had done with the Torah, and say, okay, *where* did I stop understanding this? And then I would have to start over, reading from where I last understood what I was reading until I understood it again while (usually) having to look up a half dozen words in the dictionary so I could translate the given paragraph into colloquial—rather than scientific—English.

And the days started to go by. Days that I had spent seven years building up in the form of lead time were getting eaten up with me sitting there with these scientific texts (all but moving my lips as I read) and writing down everything that pertained to what I was looking for. Days and days and days.

As I say, it hadn't really occurred to me that I wasn't going to find what I was looking for. But it was interesting, whenever I would hit a seemingly impenetrable wall of scientific jargon and think to myself, "I really can't do this. I failed grade eleven physics—almost *twice*—because of this. I dropped out of high school partly so I could write and draw comic books and partly so I would never have to take algebra or chemistry." The day I ran across Schrödinger's cat in the course of my reading, by way of example, was not a happy one. Schrödinger's cat!? GAH! I *loathed* Schrödinger's cat back when I was reading science fiction! *Don't tell me* that this has to do with Schrödinger's cat! But it did. And here Schrödinger's infernal pussy was, smack dab in the middle of my last chance to explain The Origin of Everything (of course it was a much happier day when I had finally deciphered Erwin Schrödinger's theory and was reasonably certain—as I am to this day—that it was nothing but a load of old codswallop).

And Stephen Hawking was just the beginning. Then there was Embryology. I was pretty sure Cosmology and Embryology were macrocosm and microcosm of the same things which, fortunately, they proved to be (by the way, if you ever want to get really dirty looks from female librarians, just check a lot of embryology books out of the library without a wife or a wedding ring anywhere in sight).

It was somewhere in there that Gerhard came in with the first fifteen pages of the issue before, 288, and basically quit. He was sorry, hated to leave me in the lurch with twelve issues to go, but he just couldn't do it anymore. That was one of the points where I thought to myself that if I actually *was* insane I was certainly one of the calmest insane people I had ever met and/or heard of (if through this, and subsequent events that I'm documenting here, the reader is led to believe that I was somewhat…*eerily*…calm through cataclysmic events, that can probably best be attributed to the fact that I had assumed I wasn't going to finish *Cerebus* or, if I was, it was not going to be because the forces which had been opposing me most of my life had decided to give me a free pass to issue 300. I assumed that whatever tricks there were up whatever sleeves they wouldn't start manifesting themselves until the last year which, I assumed, at that point they would then do in earnest). I

walked into his studio and he followed me in. I pointed at the pages on the wall.

"What? Since last week?"

That was why I walked into his studio: I needed the back-up of ten or eleven meticulously-rendered pages to reinforce my argument. It was a helpful visual, but not a telling point since Gerhard hated (and, for all I know, continues to hate) every page he ever did. So it became one of those interesting conversations I got divorced (in no small part) to avoid: that is, the "Which one of the two of us is sane here?" conversation.

I explained that his artwork was fine. His artwork was excellent. I had absolutely no complaints with his artwork. If I did, I would tell him. At that point in my life, portrayal was (with the exception, as we shall see, of my relationship with my parents) well out of my inventory of lifestyle choices. *Cerebus* was too important to me for me to just stand by and let him ruin it as a way of avoiding making him feel bad by telling him he was ruining it and to "shape up, or ship out". I reminded him that we had made an arrangement a year or so before that if there was anything I didn't like or that I thought needed tweaking, I would tweak it, by way of trying to alleviate the venomous level of self-loathing he held (and holds) for his work and which his unconscious mind seemed always to be taking out on his stomach

[It was literally like working with Charlie Brown. Along about issue 250 the one thing that I knew for certain about Gerhard was that his stomach hurt. A lot. For all I knew he had stomach cancer and was about to start vomiting blood all over the studio. It was at the beginning of *Form & Void* that I finally suggested that he might be more comfortable working at home. It was a difficult thing to suggest because for all he knew, I was asking him to leave. Which I wasn't doing. What I was doing was thinking, what would I want to do if I was in mortal pain 24/7? and what I thought was that I would want to work near a bed that I could fall asleep on if I needed to, so that the drawing board was nearby when I felt like working. Ger and I hadn't socialized since about '89 when the novelty had—for him, as it had, earlier, for me—worn off of touring and signings (it really is the lowest form of "travel"), so, having no idea who he was, I had no idea what he was going to do at home. We both used to drink pretty good, so—if he had become even more of a drinker in the interim—for all I knew I was sending him home to drink like a fish and expire as a couple of our friends have done. Or to watch television and die. How disciplined was he going to be without me drawing in the next room over? Also, Gerhard was the last person I had daily contact with. Was I deluding myself that I could get by without any human companionship whatsoever? Ultimately it worked out fine—from my standpoint, anyway—but there were certainly a lot of unanswered questions going in.]

I pointed out that the only major amount of background drawing I had done since we had initiated the arrangement had been to facilitate his going on vacation when I had pencilled and inked the top right corner of the two-page spread of the Sanctuary—*Latter Days* pages 78-79—which I had only been able to do because he had pencilled and inked the top *left* corner, so all I had to do was to trace it off, "flop" it, transfer it, tight pencil it and imitate his inking). Apart from that, I pointed out, I had only added a sixth and seventh layer of pen-lines to his own first, second, third, fourth and fifth layers of pen-lines on different areas of a handful of different panels. And that had been the outside extreme of what I thought was required. As always, he made vague noises of disagreement so, as I had on previous occasions, I retreated to a sports metaphor which was mostly useless because Gerhard is completely not a sports fan. On this occasion, I explained that I was like a baseball manager. I was the guy who had to decide if the pitcher needed to be pulled or if he still had an inning or two left in his arm. The analogy was imperfect because Gerhard was taking *himself* out of the game and it's usually the other way around—the manager usually has to be the one to insist that the pitcher has to come out (as Pedro Martinez should have been pulled in the ninth inning of game seven of the ALCS a month or so before this episode)—but it was still pretty accurate. In my honest, super-critical assessment, Ger was still unbelievable: throwing the equivalent of a 98 mph fastball into the bottom third of the eighth inning (if you broke up into nine innings the 236 issues that Gerhard did backgrounds on—which I did—each inning was approximately 26 issues long so it was actually even *more* extreme than that: he had the equivalent of one out in the ninth and a called strike and another strike fouled off on the second hitter he was facing and he was still, as far as I could see, throwing 98 mph fastballs and he was still ready to take himself out of the game). The advantage of discussing the situation in sports terms, of course, is that it gave me a leg up in a "who is sane here?" discussion, because Gerhard had no idea what I was talking about but he could tell that—in the baseball world with which he was completely unfamiliar—I was making a great deal of sense.

I explained to him that 289/290 was going to be a double issue, that it would be completely different from anything we had done before and, as far as I knew, I was going to be able to do a lot of the drawing because it was partly photocopied photographs, partly solid black, partly white and that I had already been breaking up the workload into easy panels and not-so-easy panels so we each got a fair share of each kind to do. I don't think it made his stomach feel any better, but he could at least follow what I was saying. Because the cover dates would be April *and* May, the double issue didn't need to be done until the end of April (it would, ultimately, ship two weeks late). Basically I told him to take his time with the rest of 288. I would start 289 and 290—I had the whole thing mapped out in script form—and he could just jump on when he had his part of 288 done.

It was not a good week.

Ger came in the following week and he had finished half of page sixteen. Half a page a week. Looking on the bright side, it was half a page that I didn't have to draw myself. It was one of those (unfortunately, in some ways) dispassionate ways of looking at things that I had found both necessary and inevitable in working on a project that everyone except me had pretty much decided, decades before, was impossible to achieve. Ger had started with issue 65 and always, in the back of my mind, I had figured he would quit or get too sick to draw anymore or die at issue 236 and I would have to draw the last 64 on my own, just as I had drawn the first 64 on my own. So, in a way, every issue past 236 was gravy relative to what was in the back of my mind. If he was genuinely, as he had said, all done, 289 to 300 would be, relatively speaking, a cakewalk to do on my own when compared to having to do 236 to 300 on my own, but it would also mean that I wasn't going to hit the March, 2004 dime I had pointed to back in 1979. But it was still, I thought (God willing) possible to finish.

I gave Gerhard the script for 289/290 as a way of reassuring him that everything was under control. Of course as soon as he walked out with it I wondered if that had been the right thing to do. Living as I did (and do) in a world where everyone thinks I'm insane and I pretty much think everyone else is insane, there is virtually nothing in my life that resembles—even remotely—a predictable reaction. It was as likely that Gerhard would come back in on Monday and declare that he had been mortally offended by the script and he was definitely resigning then and there. Or that it would just make him

think I was more insane than he already thought I was and either that would make his stomach hurt more and force him to quit or he would just quit on principle, stomach or no stomach, because he was being forced to work on this insane comic book. For me, of course, the whole issue of my sanity had become an entirely moot point by then. It was difficult enough having to teach myself the basics of various sciences in an impossibly short period of time and condense those basics into forty pages of what could only *roughly* be described as a comic book. Attempting to decide how sane or insane I looked on the basis of what I was writing was another level of complexity that I didn't need and was, to me, largely, if not completely, irrelevant when compared with getting my work done.

Unexpectedly, Ger loved the script. Most amazing thing I had ever written. Loved this part, loved that part, loved this thing over here. It was an interesting moment. Now, for good or ill, relative to the rest of the world, we were both crazy. I mean, it was gratifying in a way. I was reasonably certain I had found the Unified Theory that Einstein had been looking for so it was, as I say, gratifying that Gerhard had seen something in the script but, at the same time, I wasn't a feminist so, as far as I knew—based on all previous experience, and which would prove to be the case—that ruled me out of contention in any context or any venue which could be considered a reaction. That is, the feminist fix was in. My work was never going to be reacted to as a matter of universal feminist policy no matter what it was that work might have to say. All I could do was commit the Unified Theory to paper, keep myself as healthy as possible for as many years as possible to keep feminists from destroying it and then entrust it to posterity. I told him not to get his hopes up. It would be nice if other people reacted the same way to 289/290 that he had, but it was highly unlikely…

(there is a strange layered quality to trying to explain these things to feminists like Gerhard. I mean, they believe in feminism because they want to be fair and to them feminism is about fairness. So, when you point out that feminism unfairly rules people out of contention for anything just because those people aren't feminists, it tends to grind around their internal feminist cogs and wheels a few times and then it comes out the only avenue open to it: Dave Sim is an evil misogynist for suggesting that feminism is unfair. Even though I think myself safe in observing that my case is pretty self-evidently made just by the reaction itself: Dave Sim isn't a feminist, therefore everything he does is evil and wrong, therefore *Cerebus* is nothing, the Torah commentaries that make sense of the Bible are nothing and the Origin of Everything is nothing, etc. etc. It is feminist policy and, implicitly, it rules out dialogue in favour of absolutist shunning.)

This pretty much universal reaction to me and to my work is just something I have to take as a given and which I have had to learn to ignore.

And I'm not pointing fingers. I have likewise had to succumb to totalitarian impulse in reaction to the feminist totalitarianism being inflicted upon me. There's a lot of it about. The incarceration of suspected terrorists in Camp Delta at Guantanamo Bay by the United States government resonates with the same syndrome in my view. To elaborate:

Even while Gerhard's work had pretty much ground to a halt and I was having to accept that I was likely going to have to finish *Cerebus* on my own, my long-festering relationship with my parents was coming to a head. My mother's health was eroding with exponential rapidity and I found myself with less and less to say about it. The first break point with my family had come, I think, when my mother had a heart attack in 2002 and started smoking again as soon as she came out of the hospital. It was just something I accepted, as I accept everything that any feminist couple—and my parents are both dyed-in-the-wool feminists—tells me when I'm in their presence if it is clear that this is the reality they have both chosen to believe in.

Oh, Mum had a heart attack but she's back smoking again.

Really? That's nice.

Mostly because I don't see any alternative. To me it's no different than being around any couple (feminist or otherwise) and trying to explain to them that you don't want to be around them too much because you don't want to listen to them fight and snipe and backbite at each other. In my experience, couples are universally deaf to what they sound like to normal people. "You're too sensitive," my father would scold when I would chide him for his nit-picking criticisms directed at my mother. So I would just sit there, as I do with couples, and listen to the squabbling and the nit-picking, wishing I was anywhere else.

(Not always. I do find that spending time with a couple every now and then functions as a kind of booster shot immunization when I start thinking I might like to have a girlfriend, wife or family.)

Anyway, I assumed—at the point, some weeks after that fact, when I found out that my mother was recovering from her heart attack by smoking—that every time I saw my mother from then on would be the last time I would see her. The second break with my family occurred when my father asked me to come over for dinner on 25 February and to help me get my mother out of the car and into the house: that she had been having great difficulty negotiating the front steps after dialysis and that he had had to practically carry her into the house. I arrived to find two highball glasses of rye already poured on the counter and a bottle of red wine sitting out, presumably that we were going to drink at dinner and that she would use to wash down her many prescription medications. Finally breaking the happy portrayal we had been living for too long, I explained that I thought the alcohol was a major problem for them. I thought they were both alcoholics and my father was "enabling" my mother's alcoholism. Whatever it was, I told them, it was between the two of them and there was nothing they were doing that Alcoholics Anonymous would not have seen a hundred times before. I said that they would have to get help (I had looked up the number of AA and had written it on a post-it note which I had put behind the bottle of rye on the counter, knowing it would be discovered one drink after I left) and that they should call me when they did, but not before. I phoned a cab and stood at the front door next to the living room where my parents sat wordless as I waited for ten minutes for the cab to get there. When the cab got there, I said, "Good luck"—no reply—and left.

(of course I thought it would be a much better idea if they were to submit themselves to the will of God, to atone for their sins, to pray, to give alms to the poor, to acknowledge God's sovereignty, but in addition to feminism, they were also dyed-in-the-wool atheists. AA was the only atheistic substitute I could—however remotely and it was, indeed, a complete long shot—imagine them participating in. When I told my sister later that I had made it an either/or proposition, she said my parents would never choose either of us over alcohol. Which I knew was true.)

A couple of weeks later, my father left several messages that I was to call him. Since he didn't mention anything about AA, I ignored them. Finally he left a message saying that they thought my mother would have to have her foot amputated because of the gangrene in her big toe. I went to see her at the hospital as she was being dialyzed—something she had expressly forbidden me to do (I had offered to come in and read to her to help pass the time). I was as sympathetic as I could be under the circumstances, but I told her that it changed nothing: something would have to be done about the alcohol

situation.

Just being in a hospital and having to pretend that doctors could do anything to help her was an ordeal. I have always seen medicine as extremely limited in its efficacy…

(I thought Paddy Chayefsky had got it exactly right in *The Hospital* when he had George C. Scott, as the head of the institution, declare with the same over-the-top vehemence with which that monumental actor had informed Paul Newman's Fast Eddie Felson in *The Hustler, "You OWE ME MONEY!":*

"We cure NOTHING."

Well, yes.

Exactly so)

…particularly with the profound level of self-destructiveness both of my parents brought to it. In their minds, medicine was expected to fix them the same way a mechanic fixed their car. At which point they were entitled to go back to their sedentary, alcohol-sodden lives until the next time they needed a pill to fix something. Coupled with the fact that my parents had always had an exclusionary relationship (which was fine with me: very early I learned that the easiest way to deal with my parents was on a completely superficial level. I would imagine myself to be a member of the Royal Family—Prince Charles or Prince Philip, being as polite as possible when I was bored to tears, making interesting and harmless chit-chat as if with aboriginals or despots, maintaining a level of grace and dignity in situations not amenable to grace and dignity) that was now becoming a larger impediment to even a pretence of dialogue. As I explained to my mother, my parents had always been a two-person confederacy, with their own constitution, rules and procedures. I had no interest in watching them destroy themselves, but there was no way for me to help one without the participation of the other and there was no access point to their two-person confederacy even if I wanted to. She informed me bitterly that they hadn't been a two-person confederacy, they had been "a dictator and a junkie". Well, that was entirely true (in just such areas was the inevitable breakdown of grace and dignity taking place: if there was no place for a third person in a two-person confederacy founded upon privacy and secrecy, there was scarcely any acceptable role to be played by a third person between a dictator and a junkie: what would it be? Co-dictator? Co-junkie?). I had and have nothing against my parents. They were just another feminist couple to me, with all that that entailed. They were either "Tolerable," as my father always answered when asked how he/they were or they were simply portraying themselves that way. I portrayed myself as being interested in what they had to say, they portrayed themselves as being interested in what I had to say. On top of that there was my mother's gruesome physical appearance which I had assumed (rightly as it turns out) was attributable to the vast quantities of prescription medicine that she had been consuming for years. Her arms and legs were covered in huge purple and red welts, her skin was as thin as tissue paper, her kidneys had failed (thus the dialysis). I had no idea what symptoms the drugs she was consuming were intended to alleviate (as it turned out arthritic pains in her hands and wrists) but it became hard to imagine any symptom severe enough that its alleviation could be mentally "traded off" against the side effects caused by her prescription medication (as with everything else having to do with my parents, it was implied quite directly that this was none of my business on those rare occasions when I would point out that I thought prescription medication of any kind—except in the case of a given finite prescription for a given finite problem—was a bad idea). Which, as it turns out, was a steroid, called Pregnazone (sp?). I tried to have a conversation with one of the doctors at the hospital about the drug and the prescribing of it over the course of years (if not decades) and encountered pretty much what I expected, a professional stonewalling. My mother was a very typical case, he informed me: that was what the drug did over extended periods, the walls of her veins were as tissue-paper thin as her skin. I tried, as I always do, to ask intelligent questions. Had the drug been new when she started taking it? It was not his area of expertise. He was merely the blood specialist called in to assess my mother's chances of going through surgery without massive hemorrhaging taking place in her largely collapsed system (this was typically evasive: if he knew enough about Prednisone to know that her symptoms were typical then, presumably, he knew more about it than he was prepared to say), a system they were now "building up" by doubling the amount of steroids she was taking (this after a months-long process of weaning her off of the drug on which no one would acknowledge she was dependent. Why then did she need to be "weaned" off of it? If she wasn't dependent, she could, presumably, just stop taking it. Which led to the larger question of how they could allow someone to take a drug of that kind if they knew what the side effects would, inevitably, be.) He'd love to stand around and chat about this, but…

As I told my mother and my sister, I was not unsympathetic. Malpractice insurance rates are high enough as it is without giving jurisprudential armaments to the unwashed faithful against the entrenched medical priesthood. And even if there was no malfeasance (which I doubted), no doctor is going to be able to put me through medical and pharmacological school in a fifteen-minute chat in a hospital corridor or even a two-hour chat in his office. As any possibility of grace and dignity fled, what I was trying hard not to tell my mother was:

This is what you chose to believe in. This is your church. You chose your faith decades ago and this is what it has led you to.

My father—in an uncharacteristic Freudian slip—even called the hospital "the church" in one of our conversations.

This would set in motion a debate within myself which was either intrinsically perverse or central to the issue at hand centring on a pivotal question: *Had* it been a purely Freudian slip? Or was the malignant force which had long ago taken possession of my father serving notice that I was a) in enemy territory and b) fair game. I can't say it was particularly troubling. God's adversary, in my experience, does a lot of "dick waggling" of this very kind, looking to exploit and expand any glimmering of self-doubt. It did topple a few of my internal dominos in proximities of the nature of Marxist-feminist thought. The near universal shunning which I had been experiencing since declaring myself to not be a feminist and to be opposed to feminism might have just presented the flip side of its coin to me. That is, Marxist-feminists express their disapproval not through debate of underlying ideas (or the lack of same) but through the removal of themselves from proximity to those who refuse to genuflect unquestioningly to their peculiar societal constructs. It stood to reason, it seemed to me—and this was the new possibly perverse thought that had occurred to me—in that case, that they held the inverse to be true as well. Someone paying a daily visit to the hospital, discussing medicine with its practitioners as if it were science and not largely uneducated guesswork and who continued to enunciate false platitudes of encouragement to someone who was committing slow-motion suicide could, in just such a construct, be considered a medical church-goer. Are you sure you want to stick around and watch this? A hospital is (to me? unquestionably) hell on earth for the faithless (that is those whose faith is purely centred on the efficacy of free Marxist medical coverage). Nothing ever seems to work right or to make much sense. The infected toe which had been described to me as "red and inflamed" proved on one memorable visit to be as black as coal and looking more like a piece of charcoal

than anything else (that looks pretty red and inflamed, all right. I remember thinking). Doesn't gangrene spread? It was about two months since it had been diagnosed. Don't they usually amputate as soon as it's discovered? Was it a different form of gangrene or just another example of Marxist third world medical efficiency? The nurses' station is a-swarm with unionized nurses which either dispatched someone in a timely fashion (if I would call them) or locked them up tight as a drum (if my father would call them). Instructions contradicted each other. She should exercise, she shouldn't exercise. The doctor will be coming in today, the doctor isn't coming in today. Inexplicable meal combinations with forbidden foods. Exponential increases in dosages of drugs she was supposed to be weaned off of. As I say, hell on earth. Either coincidentally or synchronistically, as I was debating these questions internally, the SARS breakout in Toronto occurred and people started dropping like flies in Toronto's "medical churches". Again, I wasn't unduly troubled. The crisis had originated in China and I assumed that casualties were mostly, if not exclusively, among the faithless. My parents may have been in jeopardy but I didn't think I was (besides, working, as I was, 12 to 14 hours a day six days a week, being forced to lie in a hospital bed for a few weeks—or even dying–was starting to sound awfully attractive). But, overall, these just seemed like sequential examples of what I had come to see (and have come to see) as the generalized demonic possession which seems, at times (and particularly when you're spending that much time in the adversary's "church" as I was in March of 2003) to be nearly universal in our society. My mother's succession of semi-private roommates were all very nice women and girls, all of them (perhaps coincidentally but I didn't think so) with Biblical names: Martha, Rachel, Rebecca (I assumed the next one would be named Sarah: I didn't know that I wouldn't be there to find out). My mother had nothing to say to me, nothing to say to anyone—she would answer any question put to her directly and then watch the bustle out in the corridor with a fixed expression—so, on this occasion, I talked with Martha. Her health had gone downhill rapidly as well and she was spending a lot of time in and out of the hospital. She used to work in one. She missed it, missed the nurses she had worked with who had been good people, fun to be around. I ventured the opinion that it might be worth a study of the effect that retirement from the working world was having on the first generation of women who had chosen to work full-time. I told her that I thought it was overlooked that women tend to make any group that they see on a daily basis into a surrogate family and that everyone was underestimating the emotional toll it was having on them: women going from having two families (a larger work-related one and a smaller real one) to just being someone's wife with nothing to do all day. She thought that was interesting. When I turned around, my mother was looking at me, hard and with comprehension, the last time she ever focused on me without being addressed directly. I have no idea what she was thinking. She was a feminist through-and-through. I wouldn't doubt for a minute that she happily and, in her mind, anyway, heroically chose to take a dangerous drug over extended periods (my sister informed me that my mother had once told her that when the drug was offered—with appropriate warnings about potential side-effects—she chose to take the chance because she was a life-long smoker and she had never gotten lung cancer: basically she was rolling the dice in a medical "double or nothing") because she needed her hands for her secretarial job.

She drank far too much and secretly (she switched to Diet Coke from 7Up as mix because the colour would disguise the strength of her drinks which, I suspect, was prodigious), which my father either pretended not to know or of which he was genuinely ignorant.

[The only disagreements that my sister and I had, ultimately, was over whether my mother's onset of alcoholism was something she did on her own to herself or if my father was slipping her Mickey Finns—unbelievably strong drinks—as a way of exerting his power over her. My sister's view was the former, mine was the latter. My circumstantial evidence had been the occasion of my mother's retirement party to which my parents had driven me. On the way, my father, provoked by a news item on the radio, had had something deprecating to say about the Pope (the Papacy itself always seemed to offend my father in a very fundamental way I was at a loss to understand but which dated back well into his childhood). As lightly as possible, I indicated that I had "switched sides". I thought the Pope was a great man. When we arrived at my sister's, my father asked me what I wanted to drink. I said a rum and coke. When he handed it to me, I took a sip and it almost took my head off. It was virtually pure rum. When I laughed and pointed out his mistake, he was very offhand about it, barely acknowledging what I had said. I suspected from then on that that was his reaction to people disagreeing with him and that this had been his trump card—after her retirement had forced them into 24/7 proximity to each other—in his relationship with my mother and the source of my mother's alcoholism]

On my next visit to the hospital after the discussion with my sister, my mother, who, at this point, could not remember what she had had for breakfast or whether she had even had breakfast, said to me when I arrived, "Sheila said to tell you it isn't all Dad's fault." As multi-levelled an example of demonic possession as I have encountered anywhere. Who told her? How did she remember to tell me? Why would my sister relay word through my mother knowing that my mother couldn't remember the simplest facts minutes after being informed of them? If it wasn't "all" Dad's fault, then what parts were? I was long past the point of voluntarily disappearing down female rabbit holes in search of answers to such questions, but it was certainly noteworthy.

Gerhard produced about a half a page one week and then two pages the following week. So there was cause for optimism. I was keeping careful track of my own workload between daily visits to the hospital. I needed to do a page-and-a-half a day in order to keep up the pace, assuming that Gerhard would be able to jump in as soon as he was done his part of 288 and do every other page. As it turned out, by the time he had finished the last five pages of 288, I had drawn the first nineteen pages of 289/290 on my own. Which had not been as difficult as I had feared it would be (it was pretty design-y stuff—lots of solid black, with most of each panel taken up with captions and most of each page taken up with footnotes which were a) typeset and b) already done—just needing to be allocated x amount of space in each caption and footnote block), so after giving him pages 20 and 21 to do and having gotten pages 22 and 23 done the next day and knowing that he would be able to do 24 and 25, I had suddenly leapfrogged well ahead of my worst-case scenario, having gone from page 19 to page 26 in one day. So—given that he was still in his slowest productivity mode—rather than giving him pages 28 and 29, I told him to skip ahead to drawing all of the remaining covers as one 360-degree composite drawing of the room Cerebus was going to die in. My reasoning being that—however long it took him to do the eight covers—it would give me all of the backgrounds that I would need for the last leg of the story. If his health absolutely failed, I would be able to stage everything with the backgrounds that I had, tracing them off or photocopying them and pasting them in and around Cerebus as needed. If he had intermittent health problems through the last year, he could just draw backgrounds where

and when he was capable of doing so and I would tailor my part of the pages to his own capacity. Because all of my lead time had been eaten up researching and writing 289/290 (having been, to that point, usually a full issue and sometimes two issues ahead of Gerhard for the last seven years) we were now entering completely unfamiliar territory where we were practically going to be working on the same page on a daily basis the rest of the way. A disadvantage, in that it would be more difficult to stay ahead of him (I had exactly zero margin for error) if he had a sudden energy surge but an advantage in that I would know almost immediately what and how many pages I had to do on my own if he started falling too far behind.

It was somewhere in the course of this that I got a phone call from a friend of Barry Windsor-Smith's wondering if I would be available to do an introduction for a collected edition of *Young Gods,* one of three truncated series BWS had been serializing as *Storyteller* through Dark Horse in the mid-90s before publisher Mike Richardson pulled the plug.

Now, I have (as I'm sure most people do) a mental list of people to whom I owe favours: the size of the favour commensurate with what I see as their contribution to my life and/or work—and a shorter list of people whose contribution is so immense that it goes beyond doing them a favour and enters the realm of "above and beyond the call of duty". And certainly Barry Windsor-Smith was in that category. So, even as I was drawing most of 289/290 solo and making my last few daily visits to Grand River hospital (there was no question that there were large resonances occurring: Gerhard "amputating" himself from the book, my mother's soon-to-be amputated foot and Barry Windsor-Smith's already amputated *Young Gods*) and, finishing my series of essays "Why Canada Slept" (in which I was effectively amputating myself from my country as presently constituted) under excruciating deadline pressure, I was now being asked to write an introduction for a wonderful piece of comic-book art that would basically just…trail off into sketchy blue lines at the end. I had recently re-read Norman Mailer's *Armies of the Night* (31 January, his 80th birthday) and so had the cadences of Mailer's prose thrumming through my mind (it was all I could do to keep from letting that Mailer voice usurp the last instalments of "Why Canada Slept"). Besides which, I was already pretty well wired for sound with the adrenalin high of dashing through 289/290 and what was one more excruciating deadline (as I recall it was about a week-and-a-half to two weeks) between friends? And so, all large resonances at hand, I began the composition of "The Battlefield Surgery of BWS" in my (hah) spare time, at Mailer's proverbial "10,000 Words a Minute"—the essay style which he had (in my view) perfected in the late 60s and early 70s, most particularly when he had been asked to write captions and text for a book of photographs of Marilyn Monroe, a project which he essentially overpowered with a series of idiosyncratically interconnected theses of varying complexity, a work which critical opinion had pretty much dismissed, then and now, for that reason: a book intended to be about Marilyn had become a book about Mailer.

Bad Norman.

But what had seemed like a colossal error in judgment (to all save Mailer devotees like myself) now seemed like my own best possible course of action in the proposed introduction: to appear to attempt to overwhelm the book itself by writing an introduction equal to—or even surpassing it—in length. It was a favour but on a much grander scale than BWS had intended: what I was proposing was nothing less than to take a public-relations bullet on his behalf. I would create an introduction so self-evidently distracting in tone and length that the fact that there was no ending on *Young Gods* would become secondary to what "crazy Dave Sim the evil misogynist" has done now—this time to beloved Barry Windsor-Smith.

At last! A *good* use for "crazy Dave Sim, the evil misogynist"!

I was certainly comfortable with the subject and the hidden juxtapositions, being as much a devotee of BWS, *Storyteller* and *Young Gods* as I was of Norman Mailer's writing. Interesting connections began to form in my mind—it had, after all, been BWS who had drawn "Norman the Barbarian" for *National Lampoon,* a story which cast Mailer as Conan the Barbarian (which BWS had, at the time, been drawing for Marvel Comics). I started mentally sorting the essay into its component parts while composing it on the fly. I reread the entirety of *Young Gods* and all of the supplemental material which BWS intended to add to the package. My mother's forthcoming surgery resonated with the Oliver-Stone-directed horror movie (his first directing job) *The Hand,* about a cartoonist (played by Michael Caine) whose hand is amputated in a grisly automobile accident, for which BWS had drawn the background comic strips for the studio set. That would come later (my best guess, perhaps 5,000 words later). The first instalment of "Battlefield Surgery…" was faxed to Windsor-Smith Studios, a number of pages in length. Four? Six? A return fax glowed with enthusiasm and was incorporated into the second instalment. Another five or six pages with references to Gary Groth (the new publisher) and Diana Schutz (the old editor). Composing it became a great release of the tension which was building in my life and in the book.

Unfortunately, I had forgotten to explain to BWS what it was that I was up to (besides page 12). I had assumed that anyone who knew anything about Dave Sim and his style of essay writing (and BWS—who had been on the comp list since '81—certainly claimed to have read every word I had written in that time) would know enough to expect the unexpected. It's a long story that I might choose to tell one day in the pages of *Following Cerebus* or which might await future generations in the BWS section of the Cerebus Archive but, sadly, BWS chose "to doe unto Dave Sim what Mike Richardson hath done unto BWS"—he pulled the plug, leaving me with an amputated introduction to his amputated comic-book story. The resonance ended up having quite a recoil effect. Three more introductions were commissioned which, ultimately, BWS mutilated and pasted into a chaotic palimpsest of disconnected phrases. I can only hope the experience was cathartic for him. I got a nice form letter and a copy of the first printing with a BWS original drawing tipped in to the front. I think I came out ahead on the deal.

Looking on the bright side, I was now able to devote all of my time to *Cerebus* again. The day before BWS pulled the plug, I had walked out of my mother's hospital room—and hers and my father's life—for the last time. There was a voice in my head that kept asking, Are you sure you want to stick around and watch this? It was an interesting question. In one sense, I didn't think I had any choice. Honour thy father and thy mother was one of The Ten Words revealed to Moshe on Mount Sinai (what the goyim call the Ten Commandments) and that fact was really the only thing that kept me in even limited contact with my parents over the last few years. Particularly since I had broken up with my last girlfriend and since Carol West had quit as secretary and Gerhard was now a once-a-week presence in the office. My parents were the last dishonest part of my life, the last area in my life where I portrayed an affection that I didn't feel and where I attempted to maintain a level of grace and dignity that I had long since decided was no longer warranted by its objects. The still larger question was, simply, Does "Honour thy father and thy mother" apply to atheists?

Are you sure you want to stick around and watch this?

In another sense I understood what I was being asked (or what I had asked myself). My mother had been committing suicide in slow motion for a number of years through the choices that she had made. She had pulled the trigger perhaps twenty years before and now the choice was before me as to whether to stand and watch the results as, metaphorically the bullet, again, in slow motion ripped metaphorically through her skull. There was nothing I could do or say that wouldn't be fundamentally dishonest and/or completely futile.

To be as completely honest with you as possible, I also hadn't mentally ruled out the possibility that I had been killing my mother, indirectly, for a number of years. She was certainly aware of what I was writing in opposition to feminism and feminism was as much or more a part of her heart and soul as anything else in life. By not capitulating to feminism, by actively and vocally opposing feminism, I had undoubtedly broken my mother's heart in the literal sense that that expression usually entails for women. I didn't make her unhappy or uncomfortable or disappointed. I physically broke her heart in pieces. But I can also say that that was (and is) irrelevant to me. I thought (and think) that feminism was (and is) foundationally wrong. If it was heartbreaking for my mother to find us on opposite sides of a fundamental question in life, then my mother's heart would simply have to break. In my own view, she had put her heart in between me and the Truth and she had, in effect, said: in order to get to the Truth that you believe you see, you will have to walk through my heart and grind it under your heels. So I did. I can't even say that I gave it a second thought. I had, after the fact, written a dishonest piece of journalism in the final instalment of "Mama's Boy" which attempted to salvage a part of our personal relationship—a personal face-saving offered to her personally, for my having so profoundly offended against maternal self-perception (this final instalment, predictably, was displayed to family members, while the rest of the series of essays, equally predictably, were ignored. When I was informed that the final instalment had been shown to my Uncle Vic, I asked my father if he had shown the other instalments to him. "Did you talk about your mother in them?" he asked. "No," I replied—as he well knew. "Then why would I show them to him?" Feminist logic at its finest: personality at the expense of ideas), as a last chivalrous gesture from son to mother, knowing that I had bitterly, bitterly disappointed her and hurt her. The dichotomy, it seemed to me, was that I no longer believed that family was any more relevant to any individual than were love or friends. To me, all three constituted misguided portrayals which misunderstood the nature of reality. Who I am, what I think, what I do, to me, comes from my soul and I have no more intellectual certainty than anyone else where my soul came from or where it is going. My faith, however, tells me that my soul came—as the Koran assures us everything else did—"from God and to God they are returning." Which only emphasizes my strongly-held conviction—which has grown stronger over the years—that my soul and my awareness have nothing to do with genetics, have nothing to do with family. My soul didn't come out of my father's penis and it didn't grow in my mother's womb. It is the light, as it says in John's Gospel, "that lighteth every man that commeth into the world." I am my father's son and I am certainly my maternal grandfather's grandson, *physically.* I have their physical traits and mannerisms and physical weaknesses in a very noticeable way, but there is nothing in my soul or my inner awareness that resonates remotely with any member of my family. I have had more in common with people I have met riding the bus than I have with my father and mother. It seems to me that this is a hidden property of life which explains a great deal: notably, why so many families experience so much incompatibility which is glossed over, why so much of family life consists of portrayal and guilt and recrimination and friction. I imagine there are families that consist primarily of compatible souls. They aren't *portraying* love, they actually love each other, their souls actually love each other's souls. I suspect that that occurs most often in families bound by a common faith—just as I think that secular parents love their children until their children start turning into separate individuals and then I think that secular parents lose interest in the people their children turn into while holding fast to their memories of the ten-year-old child that person was. They love the baby more than the infant, the infant more than the child, the child more than the adolescent and the adolescent more than the adult. My parents had no conscious awareness of me past the age of ten. All of their stories about me are about me at age ten or younger. Rather like those people who stay in a relationship by remembering when they fell in love, and keeping that as their primary reality even as actual reality moves off at right angles to it. I think this was the source of my mother's view of her relationship with my father as being between "a dictator and a junkie". She kept clinging to what they had had years before I was born and thinking that she was clinging to him. But that person she thought she was clinging to either never existed (was a portrayal) or had long since changed into someone else. Of course there's no way of knowing. Under the terms of mandatory love (despite what you actually feel) mandatory love might be a portrayal or it might be a reality. The pressure is there to either love your family or to portray yourself as loving your family. Much of what we call love is just the physical attraction of flesh to flesh. Not necessarily breasts and vaginas or big shoulders. Eyes, too, are flesh. Hair, too, is flesh. Our flesh smiles at the flesh of others and that flesh (both motives hidden) smiles in return.

I think the unhappy miscalculation of feminism was to believe that the rules of mandatory love could be maintained, would still hold true (you *will* love your mother or *portray* yourself as loving your mother: there is no third choice) once women were out in the workaday world five days a week pretending to be men. There was certainly a nuance of embarrassment that I experienced that I didn't love my mother, but I was aware that it wasn't the profound shame that would have accompanied that same awareness at any point in the previous history of Christendom where all mothers, where motherhood itself was universally perceived as a lofty and unassailable good. The fiction (and much of *Cerebus* was concerned with dismantling the fiction that motherhood is an inherent good), in my view, could only be maintained when the mother and the-mother-in-the-home was a constant presence in one's life. There was an obligation to the centrality itself. It would be inconceivable to break the heart of a mother whose exclusive interest was maintaining the family home. In that context your mother's heart—whoever you were—was the center of your own life. Home was where you belonged and at the core of home was the mother and at the core of the mother was her heart. But that wasn't a working model in my life, by the time I was creating the not-quite-fictional Cirinists and Kevillists. The worst I could do was to offend against Queensmount School or Laurentian School or Forest Hill School, where my mother's heart actually was. All of those entities were too much at a remove from me, too tangential to who I was to operate at a central sensitivity in my concerns. I had graduated from Forest Hill and from Queensmount. My mother hadn't. I had experienced them as a student. She experienced them as an adjunct to their administrations-of-the-day. They were side issues to me. Feminism was the point. And my mother was a feminist.

The end, when it came, came abruptly, as I had assumed, for some years, that it would.

The podiatric surgeon, a Dr. Stevens, who had become something of a mythical Godot-like figure with his oft-delayed, oft-postponed visit showed up unexpectedly late one afternoon about fifteen minutes after I had arrived for my own daily visit. The only real question was whether they were going to amputate the entire foot or just the front half of it. Since my mother was in pretty wretched shape to begin with, they were not about to take the chance of performing two surgeries in the space of a month or so if the infection spread (nothing was said about the two-month delay in doing anything about the gangrene). There was a bemused quality as Dr. Stevens attempted to make a short story long through an approximation of a bedside manner that would just delay his arrival at the bedside of his next Marxist subject. "We're going to cut the front part of your foot off. Is there anything about that that you don't understand?" was all that really needed to be said. We asked him a few desultory questions and then he was gone. My father portrayed a false joviality—what *good news it was* that it was only going to be the front part of the foot and not the whole foot. He hugged my mother and looked at me as if I was supposed to join in. I could suddenly see my mother going home to her cigarettes, with a healthy shot of rye—both substances which actively constrict blood vessels and which therefore promote gangrene—sitting in a glass on the counter. I had two choices. I could celebrate with the dictator and the junkie or I could celebrate with the dictator and the junkie. Either one was fine by the dictator. I had remembered the week before, my sister and a nurse had washed my mother's hair and how much that had lifted her spirits. It wasn't a complicated procedure and the nurses were there to help. I asked my mother, "Would you like your hair washed?" Oh, yes, please, she said, with genuine enthusiasm. I got up and went down to the nurses' station to find someone who could help, explaining to the nurse who was there. She asked me to come along to find a nurse who was available to help me. We had to pass by my mother's room on the way, where we were met by my father, who informed the nurse that he planned to talk to my mother's regular hairdresser and to get her regular hairdresser to come in and wash her hair, so it wouldn't be necessary. The nurse, of course, looked at me as if I had lost my mind and walked back towards the nurses' station. I picked up my jacket, put it on. I wished both my parents a good evening and walked out. My father phoned me at the studio about forty minutes later. "Dave…" he began. I hung up on him.

My sister called a few days later to tell me that Dad was upset. We had the conversation that I related in the "Getting *Riel"* dialogue with Chester Brown. We hung up on each other. And that was that.

Truth to tell, having walked out on my parents I don't miss them any more than I miss my placenta. It seems to me an apt analogy. Yes, it was something I needed at one time. I'm much bigger now. I don't need it. Even if you could present it to me preserved since 1956, I'd hardly be interested in carrying it around with me or keeping it in my fridge or reattaching it. And it seemed clear to me that that was their attitude toward me as well.

I finished 289/290 as Gerhard was bringing in the finished cover to 291 for solicitation in *Diamond Previews*, in time for me to add Cerebus to it which he proceeded to scan in and colour on his own as he finished penciling and inking the final series of covers (which appear, linked seamlessly, and in sepia tones in a strip on the cover of this book). And I started drawing 291, explaining to Ger that if we could do six pages a week for the rest of the run, we would be done by Christmas. This was both kind and cruel. It was kind, because it gave us a target and made the end of the book more real. Instead of talking about being done in March, 2004 (the publication date), I was talking about being done in December, 2003. It was cruel, because we both knew firsthand what it was like to get back to work after the Christmas break however long that break was. In Ger's case usually a week with all of the "wheels falling off" quality that goes with the festive season of drinking and partying a little too much in various contexts and then having to glue yourself back together long enough to draw a page or two before it's time to get festive again somewhere. I had given it up, for the most part, myself, but it was still there. Even when I could keep the actual intrusion down to the 24th and the 25th and even after I had stopped drinking excessively at any time, there was still a debilitating quality to Christmas and New Years that made starting back in on the book infinitely worse than at any other time of year. What I was telling him was that, if he was productive through Christmas, he wouldn't have to go through that this year. He would be done and he would never have to bring himself back up to speed ever again.

That was really all it took. It was the beginning of April 2003 and there was the potential to be done by the third week of December 2003. We put our heads down and set to work the way we always had. The best metaphor for the way we work, to me, was in the movie *Jaws,* when Quint has clambered out onto platform jutting from the prow of the boat and Hooper has to tie off the weighted barrels to attach them to the harpoons. Quint is lining up his shot at the shark and Hooper is furiously tying the knots behind him. "Mr. Hooper?" Quint asks, squinting along the barrel of the harpoon gun. "*Don't wait for me,*" Hooper yells. And pulls his hands free just as Quint pulls the trigger.

And that was how it would be the rest of the way. We were both focused on Christmas 2003. Six pages was a good week. Five pages was a bad week. Four pages was a really bad week.

The Last Day

Page 41 - Ran into a problem almost immediately with Cerebus' wrinkles. I had drawn a number of pencil drawings of "Old Cerebus" on tracing paper, working out where and how his skin was sagging so that I wouldn't have to learn on the page. Which was helpful and worked fine until it came time to put the tone on (the 30-percent-gray, self-adhesive transparent film which was actually composed of regularly-spaced black dots). I had always used varying densities depending on the size of the image—the widest-spaced dots, LT (Letratone) 3 for close-ups, LT 10 for the middle distance, LT 17 for smaller figures and LT 24 for the tiniest pictures. In trying to stick to that program, I quickly discovered that the dots were too large and concealed the linework, the wrinkles. So, having just stocked up on LT 3 (many sheets), LT 10 (many sheets), LT 17 (a few sheets) and LT 24 (a couple of sheets)(ordinarily a sheet of LT 24, because it was used only for the tiniest figures would last six months or a year), I now found that the sheets I had the most of were largely unnecessary and that I would be using, almost exclusively, the two densities I had the least of.

Page 42-43 - Apart from that, there were the two problems of how to portray the extent to which Cerebus had slowed down in his old age. On the one hand, taking the better part of a year to show the final day of his life should have been sufficient to emphasize the point, but the comic book is a peculiar medium in which the only sure-fire way to depict slowness is to repeat a single image over a dramatically extended number of pages, varying the point of view dramatically—close-up, long shot, medium shot, close-up, wide angle—and to limit the

number of words within the panels. Since one of the givens for the last year was that Gerhard was slowing down dramatically, this became untenable as a solution: it required too many fully-drawn backgrounds. So I opted for a less direct approach which involved a lot of words in a lot of thought balloons attached to sequential images of limited movement. That is, Cerebus wouldn't change position dramatically relative to the previous (and subsequent) panels, but he would have a good deal to say to himself, internally, about each limited movement. It was an imperfect solution but it did provide a different level of emphasis of one of the definitive qualities of old age—loss of equilibrium—which is pretty well documented in all the literature I've read as being "terrifying". Since this isn't as commonly perceived among the young as a given quality of old age, there was the danger of appearing to be working at cross-purposes to my own story. Cerebus looks too "active" mentally to conform to the widest perceptions of old age. I was pretty sure it was authentic: essentially an interior "terror" at war with itself within an individual who had seldom experienced "terror" previously and had always been able to suppress it successfully with reason. It also had the added advantage of covering up a lot of the background area, therefore limiting the number of backgrounds which needed to be fully inked (the slowest part of Gerhard's job). The same was true of incorporating Jay Ward-style captions ("After a period of time roughly approximating the exact antithesis of 'Suddenly:'"). It was the most literal way of indicating how slow Cerebus had become, while also blocking large areas which would otherwise require backgrounds.

I had also expanded the size of the usual radiant bubbles which indicate drunkenness or disorientation and incorporated them into a halo around Cerebus' head as a way of alleviating one of the central problems Gerhard always had with the backgrounds—having to choose the placement of background objects that were dark enough for the gray Cerebus tone to show up against them.

Pages 44 and 45 – This is my parody of the Biblical King David and, most particularly, a specific element of David's Psalms which I have always found both amusing and appalling (and which was at the top of my list of priorities in depicting Old Cerebus, thus its early appearance in *The Last Day*): the fact that he really seems to believe that he can influence God through emotion. In the Psalter, he is forever "crying down tears all the day" and lamenting his pitiable circumstance which, given that he was a king with every modern convenience and luxury available, at the time, at his beck and call, dozens if not hundreds of wives (okay, I'll give you that one. Looks good on the surface of it, but pretty much guaranteed to have you "crying down tears all the day" and lamenting your pitiable circumstance no matter how much nookie was involved), a huge family (ditto) vast armies, horses, chariots, gold, food, wine, etc. He always seemed to be telling God (or his Lord, YHWH: he seemed to be unaware of the difference) what God's reaction was and what David thought God's reaction should be, how David believed God thought, how David thought God should think, when God was punishing him unfairly and when God had finally recognized that David was owed a few favours (of course, he was also capable of recognizing his own egregious behaviour—albeit only after the fact and only when a third party pointed it out to him—as could be seen by his reaction to Nathan's indictment of the King's choices in the Bathsheba episode) (*II Samuel* chapters 11-12). As I say, amusing and appalling. I don't find the Psalms particularly (and, often, even remotely) reverent but mostly fatuous and self-absorbed…

(To be honest, I don't know how anyone who has read *I Samuel* 8:9-22 can in any way delude themselves that *any* king was a good idea or how David came to be seen to represent some mythical Golden Age in Judaism. It seems to me that all that could be said about him was that he was the best of a bad lot. The cautionary words come from YHWH, f'cryin' out loud, who already thought that "man was evil from his youth". If YHWH thinks a king is a bad idea, you are right off the radar screen when it comes to bad ideas. I gather that the traditional Judaic view is that Saul was a bad idea but David was a great idea. Mind-boggling.)

…and I was always waiting for God to call him on it—as I have "God" doing with Cerebus in the bottom panel when Cerebus tries to assert, unilaterally, that one of his previous transgressions had been forgiven.

I also realized on these pages that expanding the radiant bubbles would kill two birds with one stone: it would emphasize the level of Cerebus' disorientation while blocking out more of the backgrounds so that fewer parts of them needed to be inked.

Pages 46 and 47 – The top of page 46 was an interesting breakthrough. I started on it at the beginning of the day, roughing it in, then tight-pencilling it and thinking to myself, "This is going too slow." Whereupon another voice in my head said, Why not draw faster, then? Which I then proceeded to do, relearning the lesson I had been continuously learning and unlearning and relearning and unlearning since I started the book: I only had x amount of drawing ability and that was as good as I was ever going to draw. This was a particularly valid point with less than ten months to go on the book. The odds were that I was not going to have any great breakthrough in my drawing abilities in the ten months that remained. I had had intensive daily drawing practice for the better part of two decades. I had gotten better (I thought), but this was as good as I was likely to get. So I just started inking faster. And, son of a gun, suddenly, *there it was:* the spontaneous ink line I had been trying to achieve over the last few years and always seemed to be missing. Of course, that seemed pretty self-evident—in fact a major duh—as soon as I thought of it. If you draw faster—that is less laboriously—the odds are that your resulting line is going to be more spontaneous. Everybody sing:

Duh, Dave.

I pointed out to Gerhard that the expansion of the radiant bubbles could be taken to ridiculous extremes. In some panels, Cerebus would be "dizzier" than he was in other panels. All that was necessary was that enough of the background be visible to identify where he was—and even that wasn't, implicitly, necessary: part of the terror of disorientation would result from not being able to "see" enough of the background. It also seemed to me that there would be a tunnel-vision effect which would allow Gerhard to move the backgrounds in from the sides of the panel and to just "fade things out" at the edges (this wasn't quite as extreme as my initial thought which was to give Cerebus cataracts so all you could see through his eyes was the periphery of the panels). As you can see from the limited number of panels where Ger took advantage of this, it was still an uphill struggle against his interior work ethic.

At this point, structurally, I figured I had given him enough ways to limit the amount of drawing that he had to do. If he chose not to use any of them—which is, mostly, what he chose to do—then that was his choice and it was his choices, not mine, which would be making his stomach hurt.

Page 48-51 – Again, trying to limit the amount of drawing that Gerhard would have to do, I photocopied and enlarged the exterior of the Sanctuary and environs from the last panel of

Latter Days and then attempted to divide up the workload 50-50. I pencilled and inked the sky and pencilled and inked all of the graffiti as well as interposing a huge sign with all of the lettering on it.

By this point, Gerhard was coming in with finished pages and everything was coming out just fine. He didn't think so, but he never had and he never would. The quality was consistent and he was making some use of the allowance I was giving him to fade out the backgrounds, particularly on page 51 where he had intensified the line density in the lower third of the page which allowed him to do straight outline the rest of the way up.

Naturally, I thought it was quite funny to have Cerebus' paternal nature cause him to dissolve into tears—the exact situation which had sickened him when he saw Todd Farlane McSpawn going through the same thing in the course of *Latter Days*. Naturally, I was the only one who found that funny.

Page 52 and 53 - Yes, this is me in the typeset thought balloons, my last active interference in the storyline. Since everyone reacted very badly to my putting myself into the storyline, I figured I would do it as unobtrusively as possible. You're welcome. I say this is me, as opposed to "God" because I'm really pretty certain that God doesn't communicate verbally in this way. I may be wrong, but I don't think He does.

I also made a mistake here which was a direct result of having seen the 360-degree view of Cerebus' rooms flat, in the form of the strip you see on the cover. Having forgotten that the fireplace at the far right actually "hooked up" right next to the writing table at the far left, I was picturing it as being on the other side of the room. You can imagine Gerhard's perplexity (and how much his stomach hurt) when he read "Now. All Cerebus has to do is to *get over there.*" Get over there? Get over *where*? The fireplace is right next to him! He put the secret compartment on the other side of the fireplace which was as "over there" as he could make it.

Perhaps as a reaction, this was the first time Gerhard really pulled the backgrounds in from the sides of the panels.

Cerebus forgetting to pray is one of those things I'm not looking forward to about senility. Did I pray a half hour ago? I think I did.

I might have to keep track on a notepad or a calendar or something.

Page 54 and 55 – This was where it all started to come together, in my view. Gerhard making use of pulling the backgrounds in from the sides and tops of the panels as needed.

Page 56 and 58 – I had spent a certain amount of time trying to cast the 'chief of security outside the door'. I kept coming back to Radar O'Reilly, the character played by Gary Burghoff in both the *M*A*S*H* movie and later the television show (the only carry-over actor from the one to the other) both for the fact that he was intrinsically competent and his CO, Colonel Blake was so intrinsically incompetent. I intentionally made him *Walter* O'Reilly instead of *Corporal* O'Reilly because it was in the television episode where the field hospital had treated a soldier who believed himself to be Jesus that the character was first given the name Walter, which seemed appropriate to the subject matter.

As I went along, the voice and speech patterns I pictured for the character started changing to that of Smithers, the aide-de-camp (accent on the camp) to Montgomery Burns on *The Simpsons.* Which also seemed appropriate given the latter's advanced age and malignant personality. Since the character never actually appears "on camera," it didn't seem like a big problem to move from one to the other mentally.

Page 59 – This was more the tone that I would've pictured for huge chunks of *The Last Day* in order to properly convey the tone of the lone, isolated, heartbroken Cerebus in his dotage. It would've taken a lot more pages.

Page 60 – Freely adapted (particularly in terms of relative heights) from a picture of John F. Kennedy with JFK, Jr., circa 1960 in the colour section of William Manchester's *One Brief Shining Moment: Remembering Kennedy.*

Page 61 – Chester Brown noticed right off that Shep-shep had three toes. Yes, in this case, the father definitely provided the "back end of the horse".

Page 62 and 63 – Here's a good example of the minor tweaking that I would do on Gerhard's backgrounds. The line-work on the edges of both "memory" images had been too coarse, which made the interior line-work look too coarse as a result. It was just a shame because Ger had put in all the time to get the line-work as fine and meticulous as he usually does on the interior of the images. It took me about a half an hour to put a finer edging on both pages. That was the most tweaking his work ever needed.

Page 64 – Again, trying to divvy up the workload fairly, I penciled and inked the 'Thunt' sound effects, the raindrops and the clouds. I do tend to see the weather as "God's punctuation," particularly when it gets to raining this hard.

Page 65 – Trying to move Cerebus above the ersatz, self-pitying and emotion-based level of a King David. I think these kinds of interior discussions are intrinsically valuable. Not with Cerebus, of course, but in general.

On this and the previous page, I did the raindrops projected onto Cerebus and Gerhard did the raindrops projected onto the furniture and the floor. Although we ink very differently, I think the integration of the two looks is pretty seamless.

Page 66 and 67 – As my 1611 King James translation of the Torah puts it, (I Kings 1: 1) *"Now King Dauid was olde, entred into dayes, and they couered him with clothes, but hee gate no heat."*

I remember one of the last interviews Groucho Marx ever gave, to *Playboy* magazine, where he mentioned one of the few times that he had met Charlie Chaplin (not that long before) at a tennis tournament or something. The last thing Chaplin had said to him when he was leaving was, "Stay warm." "I think I know what he meant," Groucho dead-panned.

I was interested to note, when Ger brought these pages in, that he had penciled and inked everything, even though there was more than enough latitude to allow him to cut some corners (i.e. if the background had receded along the lines of perspective indicated by the sound effects and thought balloons between the two Cerebus figures). I certainly wasn't going to question it. More drawing is more drawing, but it was one of those times that I wondered at the thinking behind it.

Page 68 and 69 - Even Gerhard liked how these two pages came out. How could you not? If I'm not mistaken, he inked these pages really fast. I had—however temporarily—convinced him that inking faster produced better work because it was a more spontaneous line. He could try it out, but it wasn't likely to stick.

Even in my own case, I kept slowing down again: trying to produce a spontaneous line slowly and meticulously. Which is, on the one hand, ridiculous and on the other hand, inevitable as can be seen in panel 3 of page 69 all of which is mine.

There is just too much thinking involved to get the various overlapping densities to work—from transparent to translucent to opaque. The problem was always figuring out when and where to switch back from a painstaking meticulous line like this one to a spontaneous line. I'm glad I never have to think about it again.

Pages 70-77 – Incorporating the situation I had just gone through with my mother (I still get the occasional putrid whiff of gangrene in my nostrils—I don't think it's a smell that ever really leaves you), this, to me is the meat-and-potatoes of faith. Forcing yourself to pray when you don't feel like praying because you know that whatever has made you *not* feel like praying is completely unimportant when compared to renewing your faith in God. But, *still* you don't feel like praying. It seems to me that it's something you have to force yourself to do. That is, it has to come from inside you. For me, personally, this is why I can't picture being part of a congregation. I think you would always have the hidden rationalization that everyone else was taking up the slack if you didn't feel like praying. It would be too easy to let your own actual faith slide in a collectivist context. If it's just you and you miss a prayer time or you're not concentrating on your prayer, it's very hard to find a scapegoat.

The Yiddish expression on page 73, "mama loshen"—literally 'mother language' or 'mother's tongue' according to Leo Rosten's *The Joys of Yiddish:*

> *'Can I talk* mama-loshen?' *means 'Will you understand if I speak Yiddish?'*
>
> *To say 'Let's talk* mama-loshen,' *means 'Let's cut out the formal talk (or double talk),' 'Get to the heart of it,' 'Let's talk man-to-man,' 'Lay it on the line.'*
>
> *'Mama's language' has an interesting background: Hebrew was the father's language, since the holy books were in Hebrew, and only Jewish males were taught to read. Yiddish became known as 'the mother's tongue,' the language of the home.*

Since most of my audience has far more interest in mothers and motherhood than they have in faith in God, and because I have so few stories to tell you about my mother, I'll limit myself to what I consider the two most pertinent episodes:

The first took place just after I had broken up with one of my girlfriends. I had driven with my mother somewhere to pick someone up and the two of us were sitting in her car. The subject of my recently-ended relationship came up, and I tried to explain to her that, even if it had worked out temporarily, long enough for me to get married and long enough to have children, it would've come to an end sooner rather than later and it's not as if my mother would've had grandchildren to enjoy because under our present laws I wouldn't have had any claim to the children, they would be with their mother. And then I added, "where they belong."

I don't know which surprised me more—the fact that I had added those three words that I didn't believe or the fact that my mother was staring stone-faced out at the hood of the car, seeming not to have noticed that my thought had finished in such a bizarre fashion. It didn't take me long to realize that in some way my mother had invaded me and forced me to add those three words. This was just the latest in a sequence of close observations which led to the coalescing of my view that "women read minds" (which I'm still reasonably certain dramatically understates the case) (and for which male Cerebus readers—with reasonable frequency—have found substantial anecdotal evidence. Most note, as I have myself, that women never actually deny the charge. They always evade it).

Anyway, it was definitely one of those times when Wilf Jenkins' admonition: "Trust no one" came to mind.

The second incident took place shortly after my birthday one year when, as was our family tradition, my parents were taking me out for dinner. My father passed a birthday card to me in the back seat, which I opened. It contained a fifty-dollar bill. I thanked them for it and he said, "I suppose you're wondering why the card isn't signed." Well, no, I wasn't wondering that at all, but now that he mentioned it, I looked at the card again and, sure enough, it wasn't signed. My father said something about figuring that since I knew who the card was from, why sign it? My mother, I noticed, was sitting implacable and stone-faced in the front passenger seat. "Trust no one" being my watchword by this point—particularly when my attention was intentionally called to something out of the ordinary—I mulled it over while making the usual amiable chit-chat over dinner. As with most things of that sort, I hadn't really come to any conclusion but I did, at the time, in my living room have a small teakwood table with a single drawer (which had been my night table when I lived in my parents' house) on which I kept a rudimentary bell, book and candle configuration (which consisted of a small brass bell, a small candle and an antique copy of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*). I used to put any suspicious object which had been given to me or any ordinary object which had been given me under suspicious circumstances in the drawer, so that it was under bell, book and candle. I had no idea if it worked, but there were certainly enough weird things going on in my life by that point that I figured it couldn't hurt. All of this being pre-Bible, of course. So when I got home from dinner that night, I thought, just to be on the safe side I'd put the card with the 50-dollar bill into the drawer. Which I did.

At that exact instant the power went out for about a six-block radius around my apartment building.

Trust no one.

Pages 81-83 – In some ways, it is certainly hard to maintain a sense of humour about the steady erosion of so many elements of our civilization. In other ways, it's hard not to laugh when you can see, with twenty-twenty hindsight, what had been appeared to be (at the time) a completely rational course of action comes back to bite you on the ass. In this case, the United Nations. It's certainly hard to imagine—looking back across the intervening nearly sixty years—how the UN could've gone wrong with the two-tiered structure of the General Assembly and the Security Council (with each permanent member country having a veto). It seems like basic common sense: if the major world powers each has a veto, the world will move forward only when and where everyone is in agreement. The five permanent members, England, France, the United States, the Soviet Union and China will just debate the next logical step for however long it takes to determine what it is and however long it takes to persuade everyone to take it. Hard to imagine until 11 September took place, anyway. And then the only sensible response (which I have Cerebus taking) is to freak out more than a little, suddenly realizing that all necessary actions are prohibited by the nihilism of Security Council vetoes. In retrospect it was too "progressive" (in the leftist sense) a structure, implying that progress could only be made by a consensual agreement on the "logic of the next step".

I was pretty careful in my parody here, I thought. The quote at the bottom of page 82—which I had gone and looked up at the library in a book on the creation of the UN—was actually a working definition of the mandate for the proposed world body put forward by the Republican National Committee sometime in the 1940s.

Of course, as I say, it's not hard to see where it all went wrong with twenty-twenty hindsight. Because the United

States is the richest nation on earth, the level of envy and loathing (two sides of the same coin) directed at it usually translated—and translates—into a nay vote on any given subject which the United States favours. Groucho Marx summed up the leftist sentiment pretty accurately when he sang in *Duck Soup,* "Whatever it is, I'm against it." ("Whoever first proposed or first commenced it, I'm against it."). There are whole voting blocs at the UN—Socialist countries and Muslim countries in this day and age—who vote a straight anti-American ticket which has brought us to the *reductio ad absurdum* point of Libya now chairing the United Nations Commission on Human Rights. It takes a lot of envy and loathing to skew your perceptions far enough to believe that Libya should head up any group concerned with human rights, but fortunately for those whose viewpoints are so skewed, there's more than enough envy and loathing to go around in the talk-shop-to-end all-talk-shops on First Avenue. And then, of course, you have the excruciatingly even-handed countries like Canada who find a fence in the middle to sit on in any debate so they can be on everyone's side simultaneously. Which leads to liberal pseudo-ethics like counting on the United States for our national defence while taking the side of those who are threatening the United States. We'll take the free trade pact as long as we can vote with the Socialists and the Muslims against the United States and Israel.

My own view, of course, is that those whose faith is most closely aligned with the will of God are the ones who will prevail (which has always and will always be the case), which was the larger point that the UN attempted to evade, having "bought into" the socialist mythology that religion was the problem and, therefore, secularism was the solution. North America certainly did its part in edging God out of the discussion. The erosion of faith in Christendom has led to the secular feminist takeover which vehemently opposes childbirth, vehemently favours abortion and vehemently advocates men and women and homosexuals being interchangeable. Presumably this anti-procreative viewpoint will, within a few generations, effectively eliminate Judeo-Christian white people as the majority viewpoint on the continent of Europe which will become, instead, the new branch office of the more traditionally procreative Islam: Eurabia (suddenly "be fruitful and multiply" starts to look less like overbearing paternalistic dictation and more like darned practical advice in the competition as it's shaping up).

Anyway, I assume that if everything keeps progressing on its present course, a hundred years from now, "Remember the United Nations?" will always get a good laugh wherever Muslims gather to discuss world events in Eurabia.

Page 84 – I told Gerhard to put whatever he wanted on this page and this is what he came up with. Cool, eh?

Page 89 – Since "For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory" doesn't appear in the earliest and definitive versions of the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 6:9-13…

(the Lord's Prayer itself doesn't appear at all in Mark or John and appears in a different context and a different order and form in Luke 11:2-4—*"And hee said vnto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heauen, Halowed be thy Name, Thy kingdome come, Thy will be done as in heauen, so in earth. Giue vs for the day our dayly bread. And forgiue vs our sinnes: for we also forgiue euery one that is indebted to vs. And lead vs not into temptation, but deliuer vs from euill.)*

…and Jesus' observation in Matthew 6:14 *"For, if yee forgiue men their trespasses, your heauenly father will also forgiue you."* follows more naturally on 6:12 *"And forgiue us our debts, as we forgiue our debters"* That is, since 6:13 looks both like a late addition and a non sequitur (and distinctly, to me, YHWHist in tone) I thought it was reasonably safe to make fun of it as "temporal hogwash".

Pages 92 and 93 – Still trying to emphasize just how slow Cerebus is moving. As you can see from the top left panel of page 93, I was driving at an *extreme* distortion of the distances involved so that Cerebus would look as if he was about a city block away. Unfortunately this pushed past the boundaries of what Gerhard was capable of picturing in the distortion end of things (without making his stomach hurt), so instead Cerebus just looks about six inches tall. Oh, well. The gag still worked.

Page 94 – I picked the year arbitrarily from chapter twenty-one of John's Gospel where the number is cited as the number of fish the apostles managed to catch when Jesus appeared to them on the shore. 153. I assume that there is a very good reason for the specificity of the number and, therefore, for the number itself, but I can't even begin to pretend what it might be.

Page 99-103 – Having a little fun with our old friend, France here. Troublemaker to the western world. I do think that the French tend to be female-natured and the English tend to be male-natured. The EU is just a typical Marxist-feminist scam to try to ensnare England. It'll be interesting to see if he/she/it can manage it.

Bit of a cautionary note being struck, as well. If you take into account how few references there are to Marie/Mary, Mary Magdalene, Martha and Mary, Joanna and Susanna and so on in the Gospels and what a feminist-sized mountain has been made of their respective molehills over the last two thousand years, it really gives you pause for thought as to what a nightmare it would've been if Jesus had actually married one of them. Well, no. It doesn't give *you* pause for thought. You're a feminist. You think it would've been a great idea. I mean that it gives *thinking* people pause for thought.

Page 104 - Built-in problem, to me, when you let women have a share in jurisdiction over your society. Everything develops a hidden and not-so-hidden homosexual construction. Women take to homosexuality as a central societal reality like a duck takes to water. We're just beginning to see the net effect of that now. The latest one was the 13-year-old girl in Australia who has been given the go-ahead for a sex change operation. She maintains that she's a) actually a boy inside b) sexually attracted to girls and c) not a lesbian.

Well, there you go. By law that now makes perfect sense. Or else.

This really is turning into a cakewalk for the Muslims, folks.

Page 109 – The composition of this page was intended to recall page 169 panel 3 of *Rick's Story.*

Page 110 – I wasn't sure if it was possible to actually ink a blur but I was pretty sure it would be impossible to describe it to Gerhard, so I just went ahead and did the best I could on the first two panels and then left the third one for him to do. I think we each achieved an actual blurry-looking effect in parts of our respective panels, mostly by accident. But, then, that's how these things tend to work: by accident.

Page 111-114 – One of the few stretches in *The Last Day* that wasn't accounted for and was open for improvisation. In a lot of ways, I would've preferred to just do mood pages along the lines of page 64, but it did seem to me that I owed the long-

suffering side of my readership as much "ha-ha" as I could manage. And there was a certain challenge to making the subject matter funny since most people don't tend to chuckle out loud when contemplating senility, wrinkles and incontinence. Because I was dealing with a single day, it was impossible to communicate, but just imagine how many times over the last few years of his life Cerebus thought to himself that he had never checked to see where that staircase went and was completely astonished, every time, to find out that it led straight into a wall. It seemed metaphorically apt for the senile lifestyle itself.

I mean, looking on the bright side, it would be pretty easy to keep a senile person entertained. Just make a film loop out of a classic comedy film. They could watch the same film eight to ten times a day and always laugh at the same routines.

Page 116 and 117 – I went to the library to see if I could find a book on the Woodstock Music Festival of '69 as reference for this two-page spread. I did manage to find some photo reference in a couple of books on the 60s which I had intended to trace off and render in my photorealism style. The problem was, Woodstock was too *early* on the east coast. Not enough of the kids in the crowd actually looked like hippies yet. That was a San Francisco thing. Most of them looked like they could have as easily been in the ROTC. Which was funny in its own way, but not particularly helpful, so I went with my Mort Drucker caricature style and really "hippied" them up.

It didn't really show up, but the word balloon sizes and placements are mirror images on the two pages, making the whole thing a kind of Rorschach inkblot test. Which, thirty-five years later, is probably as apt a description as you could find of Woodstock, Kent State and the '68 Democratic Convention in Chicago. Everyone's going to see something different.

Page 118 – High noon. For those of you keeping track, the sunlight has been moving through the room as the day goes along. See, when you're Gerhard, those are the kind of things that are going to make your stomach hurt a) because they're darned difficult to do and b) because no one notices. By way of emphasizing the point, I had Cerebus fall into his reverie about the music festival on one side of the room and told Ger to have him awake from it on the other side of the room. If you compare the shadows on page 115 with the shadows on this page, that will tell you about how long he was "gone" for.

There were many times, particularly during the last year, that Ger and I would ask each other why we bothered to make things that complicated. There really was no good answer, apart from We might as well and That's just how we are.

Page 120 – Good case in point. I spent about an hour digging through old piles of tone so that when Cerebus convulses in panel three and starts feeling sick in panel four he would lose some of his "colour" and then go "pale" in panel 5 (going from a 30% LT 24 to a 20% LT 23 to a 10% LT 22). I found a sheet of LT 16, which was a 20% tone, but it didn't have the same "lines per inch" dot density, so I had to go through just about every sheet of tone in the place to find an LT 23 with enough tone still on it to do three panels (panels three, four and six, where he starts to recover). At least I had my own Why do I bother? story the next time Ger came in. Even he had to admit that there wasn't enough of a difference between the 30% and 20% tone to notice.

Oh, well. That's just how we are.

Page 121 – Have to admit that this part was autobiographical. Take that 13-year-old girl in Australia who a team of psychiatrists or psychologists have decided really needs a sex-change operation. My level of curiosity about these subjects is absolutely zero. However the psychologists or the psychiatrists managed to arrive at a complete consensus that what's wrong with this 13-year-old girl is that she needs—at government expense—the penis to which she feels entitled. I really don't want to know. I mean, I just know that whatever information could be imparted on the subject would just make me feel like puking, so, I'll just leave it to the feminist takeover to keep going as far as they can, as fast as they can. Either they come to their senses or, in the long run, the Muslims take over through sustained procreation and common sense about 13-year-old girls. Given the alternatives cropping up every day on the front page of the *National Post* either one is fine by me, at this point.

Page 122 – I have to confess that I find the idea of The Church of Jesus Christ, Scientist inherently funny. I don't mean to offend against anyone else's faith. Only God knows who has sufficient faith and who hasn't and it could be that all, some or most of the adherents of that Church run rings around me in the faith department. We'll find out on Judgement Day. It did, however, lead me to think that in our age of increasing scientific specialization that there might be an opportunity for a schism or two along these lines. Particularly The Church of Jesus Christ, Pediatrician or The Church of Jesus Christ, Day Care Supervisor. If we're just going to fold our cards and wait for the Muslims to take over, I figure we might as well have some fun on the way out.

Page 123 – I wanted to show that Cerebus, in spite of his memory loss was still sharp as a tack in the short term. Try reading out loud "Borealan-Highland-deep-mine-platinum-basso-relievo-with-yellow-gold-filigree-and-mother-of-pearl-intaglio-inlays" and then repeating it word-for-word without looking at it.

I used a Thesaurus for that stuff, by the way. A Thesaurus is great for comedy because you can look for the funniest-sounding words. I did look them up in the dictionary to make sure I was using them correctly (that's the biggest knock against a Thesaurus: if you don't check usage in the dictionary you can make really unhappy mistakes). Like "incarnadine". Much funnier than "pink". If you look closely you'll see that "veined" was lettered in after the fact. It was much funnier with another adjective before "white marble". It made the lettering unbalanced, but on the Cerebus project funny always won out over aesthetically-pleasing where the choice had to be made.

Yes, after all that, I did ask myself, Why do I bother? and told myself right away, That's just the way I am. Of course I was also getting more mileage out of Ger's and my new favourite:

By Christmas, this will all be over and the point will be moot.

Page 125 - This sight gag was a pain in the ass to do as well. When Ger and I were going over the pages, I was actually acting it out for him: indicating that Cerebus puts his hand on the door at an angle and then pushes himself back and away from the door at approximately a 30 degree angle to the plane of the door.

Gerhard's very polite, so, of course he's nodding his agreement and telling me that he understands, but inside he's thinking "90 degrees, 45 degrees, 30 degrees, what's the difference?" A not unnatural thing to think when you're working with Crazy Dave Sim. This is just another thing Dave is being Crazy about. Of course, that lasted until he had the whole top

of the page pencilled with Cerebus pushing himself away from the door at a 90-degree angle and had gotten down to the later panels where he realized that Cerebus was now nowhere close enough to the door to take a direct hit in the face from the cheese tray which would be coming in off to his right and which he would be turning to watch go past him.

Well, that's going to make your stomach hurt right there, when you find out you have to erase your last few hours worth of work, but that's what you get for being polite instead of saying out loud, "90 degrees, 45 degrees, 30 degrees, what's the difference, Crazy Dave?"

'Cause I could have told him.

Pages 127-136 – Again, I thought this was pretty funny if you consider that every time Cerebus ordered a hickory-smoked cheese tray he thought that they sent too much up, and every time he eats every last scrap (so they probably kept sending more up each time, on the assumption that that's the best way to determine the amount that's required: they'll know when they've finally sent too much because there'll be some left over) (likewise, they would make the natural assumption that a grown-up who gets heartburn from eating a specific quantity of a certain brand of cheese is going to unilaterally limit his intake. You'll notice I'm always careful to never use "Cerebus" and "grown-up" in the same sentence).

Pages 130 and 131 - I had heard that Bill Mauldin, the legendary creator of World War II cartoon icons, Willy and Joe, had died and thought I had to get a couple of Mauldin-style dogfaces into *Cerebus* before the end of my story. I had actually written Mr. Mauldin a letter in response to an item which had appeared in the *Comics Buyer's Guide* (courtesy of an editor friend of his in California who said that he wasn't doing very well in a nursing home but that he appreciated the letters which he received and which were read to him and which could be sent c/o this editor.) My letter was as follows:

Dear Mr. Mauldin:

A recent issue of the Comics Buyer's Guide *mentioned that you had had a run of bad luck lately with your health and that you might appreciate hearing from any army veterans and admirers of your work. I regret to say that I am not a veteran, but rather one of the very fortunate beneficiaries of the "blood, sweat and tears" which you and your generation so willingly gave on our behalf. So, first of all, thank you for that.*

Second of all, I am very much an admirer of your work, as is my Uncle Vic, and my dad, Ken Sim. The first time I saw your Willie and Joe cartoons it would have been in the hardcover collection Up Front*, which my uncle always had, ready-to-hand, in his bookshelf. I don't remember exactly the first time I saw your work, but—as was mentioned by you as a common occurrence in an old interview excerpted in the* CBG *article—I would be willing to bet dollars to donuts that it began with my uncle and my father at the dining room table quoting captions of Willie and Joe cartoons to each other and busting up laughing. Any occasion for a boy when he sees his father bust up laughing (as long as it isn't at the boy himself) is sure to excite a level of interest. Curious as to where my father would have first seen the Willie and Joe cartoons (like myself he is a beneficiary of the sacrifices of veterans but not a veteran himself), I phoned him yesterday. He knew, right away, that the first time that he had read* Up Front *would've been a copy that he got from the Book of the Month club shortly after he and my mother were married (which puts it at 1951 or shortly thereafter). He remembered that the book selections came with some kind of brochure and that he would've kept the brochure with the book. Of course, the point was moot because (in an ill-advised decision which we have all made with books that we find particularly enjoyable) he had loaned* Up Front *to someone and damned if he could remember who. Why is it that we always lend thoroughly memorable books to completely unmemorable people? This is, perhaps, a question best left to greater minds than my own. Anyway, for a number of years, my father was—very much to his regret—*Up Front*less. A few years back when he and my mother went on a trip to England (thinking that the odds might be better of finding the book a little closer to where Willie and Joe's actual adventures took place), they made the effort to try to track down a copy. All to no avail. As happens in these kinds of stories, upon returning home, my mother went to a used book store here in town, asked about* Up Front *and discovered that they had not one, but two copies of the hardcover from 1945. She purchased both so now my uncle, my father and I all have our own copies of* Up Front*. And no, sir. I'm sorry, you can't have mine. My gratitude for your wartime service is considerable but there are (I'm sure you'll understand) limits to these things.*

Anyway, once I had explained to Dad the reason that I was asking about his personal history with Up Front *(and once he had ascertained that I wasn't harbouring any delusions that I was going to get his copy. I am blood of his blood and flesh of his flesh, but there are—as I well understand—limits to these things), he then remarked that he and Uncle Vic know the Willie and Joe cartoons just from their captions. "Ord'nance? Ahm havin' trouble with mah shootin' arn," He said.*

"Able Fox Five this is Able Fox. I've got a target, but y'gotta be patient." I replied. "Beautiful view. Is there one for the enlisted men?" he said. "Eek," I replied. (That got him laughing). He countered with "Aim between the eyes, Joe, they sometimes charge when they're wounded," (that got me laughing). Of course, I had cheated by digging out my copy in preparation for writing this letter but all that did was remind me of one that I had forgotten, so I couldn't do it justice with a deadpan delivery: "I coulda swore two krauts was usin' that cow for cover, Willie. Go wake up the cook." Much, much better line when you're not laughing all the way through it.

I phoned my Uncle Vic this morning to get his recollections of Up Front *and, just as with my Dad, he is sure that he had gotten his copy from the Book of the Month club. He wondered aloud if there even is such a thing as a Book of the Month club anymore. I admit that I don't know the answer to that one. Perhaps there is a Video of the Month club and if you order enough videos you get a book as a bonus prize. My Uncle Vic reminded me of your later career as a political cartoonist and that your cartoons would often turn up in* Time *magazine and other places illustrating articles on current events. Like most people I thought you deserved a Pulitzer Prize for your cartoon on the occasion of JFK's assassination depicting the statue of Lincoln in the Lincoln Memorial weeping.*

I've been writing and drawing my own comic book for a while now—it'll be twenty-five years in December. Small but loyal audience of a few thousand. I mention this only to indicate, in addition to the warm spot Willie and Joe hold in my uncle's heart, my dad's and in my own—and just consider what an achievement that is with three guys who haven't been any closer to military service than a movie theatre!—that the Willie and Joe cartoons still hold up as tip-top examples of the cartoonists' craft more than half a century later. Great composi-

tion, great expression, great body language, great execution, buoyant spontaneous brush strokes, spotting of blacks. I'll stop now before I start growing a beret and a pointy little goatee. But, to say the least, you always made the most difficult parts of cartooning look easy.

Well, I hope you have enjoyed this letter even though it says so many nice things about you and about your work that it has probably left you wondering—as I'm always wondering when I'm getting to the end of one of "these kinds of letters"—when I'm going get to the part about me wanting a free drawing or an original cartoon or asking you to co-sign a bank loan or something.

As it is always a relief to me and as I'm sure it is a relief to you, this letter doesn't have one of those parts. No, sir. This is just to say "thank you" on behalf of Uncle Vic, my dad and myself for all the entertainment and enjoyment you've given us over the years. The exact number of years doesn't really bear thinking about. But, a lot of years.

If even a handful of my own readers still find my own work half so memorable decades after I have at last put down my pen and brush, I will count myself fortunate, indeed. To use the phrase which always denoted my father's highest accolade, Mr. Mauldin, "Y'done good."

Hope you are feeling better soon.

Sincerely,

Dave Sim

Gerhard's background on this page is another one of those Why do we bother? moments. In order to maintain a level of continuity no one but us would care about, I had gone back to all of the exterior shots of the Sanctuary that had appeared in the book back during *Latter Days,* and had found a shot in panel 3 of page 116 that both a) gave an overview of the Sanctuary and b) concealed enough of a central portion of it (behind the flying Rabbi figure) that it could be established after-the-fact that that was the section that housed Cerebus' suite of rooms. So that's what you see here.

Because that's just the way we are.

Page 139 – I asked Gerhard to literally have the background sag behind Cerebus to echo how stricken he was at the news.

Pages 141-143 – I tried to help out as much as I could with these pages by reducing, on the office photocopier, the previous exterior shot of the Sanctuary and the observation causeway and the entrance and making a rough composite background (I just traced off the concrete ramp that Ger had already drawn and "flopped it" to create its mirror image on the right side of the page. It was pretty ugly but it was close enough for Ger to use as the basis for a clean copy.

Most of the time, I think of the characters I drew on pages 142 and 143 as caricatures. There are particularly gruesome days in downtown Kitchener when they seem more like understated portraits. It always amazes me that a pretty young girl, in this day and age, looks at herself in the mirror and thinks, "You know what I need? I need three rivets in my eyebrow."

I thought the advertisements I came up with were pretty "over-the-top" but even I have to admit that the government of Australia agreeing that a 13-year-old girl needs a sex change beats anything I could make up by a very wide margin.

Congratulations, feminists!

Page 149 – I would have to go along with Cerebus' assessment here. It certainly "almost never works" for me to hope that God will tell me what to do in my dreams. I think that's a matter of mistaking psychiatry for faith, the unconscious mind for your soul. It seems to me that decision-making is the point in this vale of tears. Obviously, God knows what your best course of action is in the same way that your teacher in high school could write your exams better than you could. But that didn't make it a sensible choice to have your teacher write your exams for you. It really defeats the *purpose* of an exam, right?

Maybe it's different for each individual, but that has been my experience: it seems to me that what is expected of us in this life is a combination of good decision-making and perseverance. As with anything else, attainment is usually just beyond the threshold of what you think you can tolerate. If you keep praying and believing for a few days or a week or two weeks past the point where all you can consciously think is, "I. Really. Do. Not. Get. This. At. All," everything usually sorts itself out. In the same way that physical fitness lies just beyond the threshold of what you can achieve within your comfort zone. To improve you have to push your largely self-imposed limitations.

Of course, given that I was royally sick of Cerebus by this point and given that it was his last day and given that there wasn't the remotest chance of his improving in any meaningful way, I was quite pleased to step in and provide—on page 151—a four-fold answer to his question in the last dreams he would ever have. As Cerebus himself once said, "You can get what you want and still not be very happy."

True enough.

Page 150 – The preamble to my own prayer which I printed on the inside back cover of *Cerebus* 300 (minus, for obvious reasons, "And Muhammad is His Last Messenger and Seal of Prophets.").

Page 155 – Boy, this lettering took a long time.

That's it. Nothing more interesting to say than that.

Boy, this lettering took a long time.

Page 158 – The statement at the bottom of this page. Not to put too fine a point on it, but I think this is really what the overall debate comes down to. Either homosexuality and all related conditions are peripheral to our civilization (the masculine viewpoint) or homosexuality and all related conditions are central to our civilization (the feminist viewpoint). You can try and make it sound more complicated and nuanced than that, but, again, that's what I think the debate is ultimately all about. Any acceptance of homosexuality and related conditions beyond the demarcation of tolerance is just asking for trouble. Which is not to deny for a moment that Consciously Asking For Trouble is both a) mothers' milk to vast constituencies in our society and b) a central hallmark of democracy itself. In a democracy bad choices and the conscious decision to choose them are as scrupulously protected as are good choices and the conscious decision to choose them. I think the only difference between the faithful and the secular viewpoint is that the secular viewpoint wants bad choices to be treated as if they were interchangeable with good choices and to have that viewpoint institutionalized through the democratic process.

It is my considered opinion that 13-year-old girls having sex- change operations mandated for them is just the first step down that very dark and spooky road.

Here we go, ladies. How's your nerve these days? Better tell your nerve to get ready for a good workout.

Pages 161-169 – Only a hundred pages later, I was finally

able to do a sequence that had exactly the tone I had originally pictured for the entirety of *The Last Day.* In retrospect, I think I made the right choice. Two hundred and fifty pages of this would have a) gone by way too quickly and b) would have been depressing as hell.

I told Gerhard to keep the backgrounds to just a halo around Cerebus, by way of emphasizing the extent to which everything was collapsing in on him at this point.

It was a great relief to surprise the entire readership by basically having Cerebus the scrapper, Cerebus the club-fighter, Cerebus the contrarian flat-out give in, having him completely capitulate to the feminist-homosexualist axis with only the barest moment of hesitation—all for the sake of seeing his son.

There (I was saying) you happy now? You think it would make everything all better if John Paul II was to sign something similar?

No, I didn't think you *actually* thought so.

So why does your team keep pushing for it?

What do you think you're going to win when everyone loses?

Pages 170 and 171 – Thought I'd give another try at the Rorschach ink-blot design, this time moving Cerebus from *outside* the ink-blot (which contains his thoughts) to *inside* the ink-blot with the critically important thought now outside the ink-blot. I think it was a pretty effective illustration of what a really bad decision might look like, visually.

Page 178 – The Biblical quotes on this page are from the First Book of Moshe (the death of Joseph in Egypt: Chapter 50, verses 24-25 *" And Ioseph saide vnto his brethren, I die: And God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land, vnto the land which hee sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Iacob. And Ioseph tooke an othe of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visite you, and ye shal carie vp my bones from hence."*) the Fifth Book of Moshe (The death of Moshe on the east side of the Jordan River: Chapter 31, verses 1-2 *"And Moshe went & spake these wordes vnto all Israel. And hee saide vnto them, I an hundred and twentie yeeres old this day; I can no more goe out and come in: also the YHWH hath said vnto mee, Thou shalt not goe ouer this Iordan."*) and the First Book of Moshe (Jacob answering Pharaoh's inquiry: *How many are the dayes of the yeeres of thy life?* Chapter 47 verse 9: *"And Iacob said vnto Pharaoh, The dayes of the yeeres of my pilgrimage are an hundred & thirtie yeres: few and euill have the dayes of the yeeres of my life bene, and haue not attained vnto the dayes of the yeeres of the life of my fathers, in the dayes of their pilgrimage.")*

Page 179 – It was kind of funny when Ger brought this page in, because he had drawn the usual shimmering circles and star bursts over Cerebus' head.

Whoa no, I chuckled. He's *way* past that point.

While Gerhard took care of his share of the office work, I carefully darkened up the circles and starbursts until they had virtually disappeared against the line-work on the headboard of the bed.

Oh, yes, I thought. That's better. That's *much* better.

If I was going to be—as so many people had assured me I was going to be—emotionally distraught at the death of the character I had been writing and drawing for twenty-six years, I sure had a funny way of showing it.

Page 180 - Hope this got a big laugh out of you. It sure got a big laugh out of me.

Page 181-188 – Of course, having had the punch-line for the previous page in mind for a while and then having *Runoff* creator Tom Manning do an interview with me for *Filter magazine* at the beginning of 2003—which appeared in the May-June issue of that year—part of whose intro read:

> *The comic book remains our most unrealized cultural medium. Perhaps from a lack of confidence from many of its creators, or a continued misunderstanding by society (where they are still mentioned with a raised eyebrow), comics are often denied the ambition and attention that other art forms enjoy. Similar to cinema in the early 20th century, this medium is mostly manifested in endless serials or vaguely veiled lowest-common-denominator knock-offs. But in Dave Sim's* Cerebus, *the comic book has found its* Citizen Kane.

I thought I might as well indulge myself in doing my own cheap knock-off of the wonderful shot in that film where the camera passes through the neon sign and down through the skylight into the seedy nightclub where Susan Alexander is drinking and talking to the reporter about Kane. And then after they've finished talking the shot is reversed. I mean, if I wasn't going to do it now, when *was* I going to do it?

[I also considered running the "…in Dave Sim's *Cerebus,* the comic book has found its *Citizen Kane"* as a quote on the back cover of this book and then thought better of it. The level of sheer malice directed against me by the Marxist-feminist comic-book field was increasing at an exponential rate as it was (this had been the first favourable mention of *Cerebus* since issue 186 came out and would be the last favourable mention of *Cerebus* probably in my lifetime). There was no need to make it worse by misappropriating one of their tribal cultural totems and perhaps doing permanent damage to Tom Manning's fledgling comic-book career just because he wasn't aware of how the Marxist-feminist game is played]

So, my contribution was basically the same as the double page spread 142-143. I just separated all of the elements of the backgrounds into three layers and then tried to visualize where and what part of each of the three layers would appear if you were slowly pulling back from the Sanctuary, down into the entryway/courtyard and then up through the Sanctuary sign on the top of the wrought-iron gate and then down again. It's basically the same principle as the multi-plane camera in animation which the Disney Studios had pioneered back in the 30s, with the notable difference that it works better on the comic-book page because the three layers don't actually move on the comic-book page so it's less obvious that the backgrounds are actually three flat layers. As with the 142-143 two-page spread, I was using Gerhard's own backgrounds to produce as close as I could get to a blueprint of what I thought the finished pages should look like which Ger could then trace off and correct where he needed to do so. It is one of the interesting balancing acts required when trying to imitate film narrative on the printed page that an *accurate* transition from panel-to-panel (i.e. layer two moving a half inch to the right in each successive panel) is not always the right *looking* panel transition. So, I tried to confine myself to doing the panel transitions as accurately as possible and left Gerhard to juggle and tweak the interior elements in such a way as to make a better composed picture where he saw the opportunity to do so.

Page 188 – I had decided to keep the old masturbating degenerate and the young girl as the only element from the original 142-143 spread. Metaphorically, this was my best assessment of where Cerebus had "gone wrong" in his life: choosing to get involved with a young girl who just happened to look like Jaka. I'm sure a lot of people would argue with

me, but I think the point is valid: any wide disparity in age between a man and a girl is, to me, thematically and ethically undifferentiated from child molestation and, consequently, sown with the seeds of its own inherent destructiveness. It's a bad idea that feels very, very good. I speak with the authority of a man who, at the age of 28 had a 15-year-old girlfriend. For people like myself who are *only* drawn to girls who are much, much younger this is very difficult to accept in a lot of ways, but it seems a matter of common sense. It is preferable to turn your back completely on the gender opposite than to invite the inherent destructiveness of a relationship with so wide an age disparity. Had Cerebus done so, his story would have ended far more happily than it did.

On another level, the image also represents the outer thresholds of where I think we are going as a society. There is an implicit revulsion at what I've depicted but, then, that same revulsion existed a hundred years ago relative to homosexuality. In exploring the lunatic extremes of "child rights"—under which a 13-year-old girl can be seen as needing a sex change operation and where dressing and posing much younger girls like five-dollar hookers in "Baby Porn Star" t-shirts is seen as "cute"—it seems to me that we have taken the first major steps on the way to accepting pedophilia as a comparable human right to homosexuality on the wayward journey in the direction that the Marxist-feminists (unimpeded, so far) are incrementally leading us, founded on their rock-solid conviction that revulsion in itself is wrong and that the suppression of revulsion and acceptance of that which society considers revolting constitutes the highest good.

I'm certainly glad that I will have been long dead by the time that particular societal debate is taking place.

Pages 189-191 – The three leftover pages. I had promised myself for some time that—if there were any pages left over after everything had been fitted into place that I would use them for a dream sequence from which Cerebus would be awakened by the arrival of his son. The dream sequence would have consisted of a single double-page image of Cerebus asleep on his bed, adrift on a black river, floating past an immense three-headed dog.

Sadly, when I got to that point, I realized that I couldn't bring a dream anywhere near the storyline at such a critical juncture. The overuse of the "it all turns out to be a dream" cliché in popular media has had its negative effect and a certain number of correspondents who had attempted to guess the ending on *Cerebus* had assumed that I would be making use of it (most couldn't conceive of any other approach, which to me speaks eloquent volumes about our present culture). I thought the points made in the ending on the book were important enough—and were probably going to be ignored to such an extent already—that I wasn't going to take the chance on the readership getting bogged down in determining where (or if) the dream sequence ended. I also concluded that—as much as the introduction of Greek mythology's Cerberus at this late date might make for an enjoyable and entertaining and mood-setting visual—it would undoubtedly have led most of the Cerebus readership (which is pagan both by inclination and sympathy) to conclude that the crossing of the River Styx was the actual ending and that everything after that had been a dream on the Other Side.

Instead I decided to poke a little fun at the sombre *Citizen Kane* classic tracking shot, waking the reader up with the sound of a key in a lock and having him/her scramble backward through the points of reference in search of the source of the sound. And then to restore the sombre tone by a slow pan across the darkened bedroom. That was the idea, anyway.

Page 192 – The problem I faced with Shep-shep was in trying to make him ominous without making him into a complete distraction from the story. The whole visual side of this part of the story was a challenge because I hadn't pictured it. I knew the dialogue and the pacing inside-out, upside-down and backwards but I hadn't envisioned the actual page breakdowns. For example, exactly how many and how large to make the "Sktch sktch" sound effects issuing from the box, where to first introduce them, etc., how to strike a balance between being subtle enough to be mysterious but not so subtle that they could be overlooked, the "stage business" of Shep-shep's body language, positioning and movements. I decided to try to play off of the lack of decision-making by changing each decision once I had made it as a way of emphasizing what a creepy and mysterious character he was—very much his mother's son. Some examples: dressing him as an Arab seemed a good place to start since it would foreshadow the key Egyptian element of the story while allowing for the misdirection of getting people thinking along Muslim lines and all the misapprehension *that* would be likely to engender in my pagan, secular-humanist and largely American readership…

Page 193 – …and then rendering him almost completely in silhouette, which, in clichéd comic book and film narrative usually implies that some physical deformity is being concealed by shadow…

Page 194-200 - …*underplaying* the "sktch sktch' sound effect in its first appearance and then *overplaying* it by devoting most of a single panel to it (the point where the scene gets illuminated seemed a good spot for it, resonating with the greater amounts of visual information being provided: first and foremost that Shep-shep had no obvious physical deformity). I was counting on the sudden illumination and the emphasis of the sound effect to distract the reader from the fact that Shep-shep was turning an oil lamp on *with one hand*—that is, without lighting the wick—which is a physical impossibility, hoping that it would register on the reader's unconscious as another indication that this is one creepy fellow.

I also tried to work with Cerebus' colouring, varying the brightness of his features (even though the intensity of the light from the oil lamp would be pretty much unchanged) from largely white with a thin black penumbra and an edging of 30% tone (to indicate joy and openness) to black shadow and 30% tone (to indicate disappointment and unhappiness). I told Gerhard to ignore the varying densities completely and to ink the shadows on the pillows and the blankets as they would appear to the viewer relative to the light from the oil lamp (darker where you were looking into the lamp and lighter when the lamp was out of your line of sight). I hoped that was the solution and sweated bullets over the week that the pages were gone. A great relief when it turned out that that worked. With Gerhard holding a consistent light density in the background, the varying light densities on Cerebus didn't look nearly as jarring or unnatural as they had when he was the only thing on the page.

Made the late decision to not try to make the different pictures of Shep-shep look more than vaguely like the same individual so that the actual contours of his face change from moment to moment. Creepy.

Page 200 – The step-stool moves out from the bed and under Shep-shep without his having touched it. Creepy.

Pages 202-205 – Having "gotten away" with a pretty wide variance in Cerebus' colouring, as is usually the case, I decided to push my luck by eliminating the penumbra and the shad-

ow on Cerebus' shirt completely for three pages. The sort of decision you make when you've gotten used to sweating bullets for weeks at a time as a way of life.

It worked. I have no idea why it worked, but as long as Gerhard kept the light densities in the background even, I had a very wide latitude of brightness that I could work with. It was interesting to still be making discoveries like that that late in the day and knowing that I would never have any use for them again.

In terms of the subject matter, I was just having some fun with the way people try to change your life on you when you're even a minor public figure like myself. The only major change I've gone through in my life (which I inform all interviewers) was reading the Bible and the Koran and, thereby, cleaning up my act but, given that all arts coverage is Marxist-feminist in nature, that is never how I am portrayed in print on the rare occasions that I am portrayed in print. Marxist-feminists have to find a Marxist-feminist portrayal that suits you which is why I have become "a brilliant but troubled comic book creator who went insane and ruined his 26-year-long project." The only thing missing is my despondent suicide because I was exiled from Marxist-feminist society which is why the Marxist-feminists keep waiting for me to kill myself. The longer I go without killing myself, the more they've decided it's a good policy to ignore me. I don't think that's going to work in the long term, either, but the life of a Marxist-feminist takes place in the eternal present, so I'll just have to wait for the day when it becomes obvious, even in the eternal present, that ignoring me isn't working and see what they do then. Funny little creatures.

This was also the part of the story where I got Gerhard to do a computer model of the room on his architecture program (with lamps standing in for Shep-shep and Cerebus) and to "shoot" a bunch of different angles that he would find interesting to draw. He came up with a great innovation: he printed out the outline program in reverse so that he could flip the image over and, using his light table and some thick and thin markers, actually draw a quick and dirty "production sketch" on the reverse side that I could match to the available space.

A great innovation that he'll never use for the rest of his life, either. Page 206 panel 8, page 207 panel 3, page 208 panel 4-6, page 209 panel 3-5, page 210 panel 1 and page 214 panel 1 were all done using Ger's quick and dirty "production sketches" as templates.

Page 208 – Shep-shep stands up and the stool he was sitting on returns to its place. Creepy.

Page 214 – The Biblical reference is to The First Book of Moshe Chapter 41, verse 45: *"And Pharaoh called Ioseph's name, Zaphnath-Paaneah, and he gaue him to wife Asenath the daughter of Poti-pherah, priest of On: and Ioseph went out ouer all the lande of Egypt."*

It was an obscure point, but what I was having Shep-shep allude to here was that he and his mother were going down into Egypt as *husband-and-wife*. That was what amused him so much, when Cerebus filled in the blank with "and his Egyptian *whore*". To that sensibility (which is not altogether rare in our society) the more perverse the situation, the better the situation. Not only was he sleeping with his mother and intended to marry her, she was a whore, into the bargain. Oh, how…*exquisitely*…shocking! Must have been the best news he had had all week.

Page 216 and 217 – I don't think we're too far from this. The same legal arguments which shelter abortion from being interfered with (the technology exists, there is someone willing to perform the procedure, it's a part of my body that's at stake)—and which were extrapolated in the Roe v. Wade case from the right to practice birth control without state interference—are the same legal arguments that would allow cloning and gene splicing. All that is required is for a Marxist-feminist to decide that she wants to have a baby with her dog and there is no way for government to ban the procedure without also banning abortion and banning birth control (goes the "logic of the next step"). This is what happens when you allow the Marxist-feminist sensibility in proximity to the Law and they let the Law off its leash.

It requires a couple of steps, as abortion did. First you need individuals to overcome their natural revulsion and then you have to make revulsion illegal and the procedure itself into a human right. It seems to me that this is the implicit goal behind making homosexuality interchangeable with heterosexuality and fighting to get a 13 year-old-girl the right to have a sex-change operation because she wants one. These are the scaffold points on which cloning and gene splicing will be made into a human right.

I also believe that we've been "up here" before—that is, that there are ancient civilizations whose every trace has been eradicated which attained to the sort of medical and genetic know-how that we have and—as soon as the Marxist-feminist sensibility began to dominate their society—they began happily churning out the sorts of monsters and hybrids that we see in Egyptian hieroglyphics. I suspect that the earliest hieroglyphics depict the later erosion that takes place once these abominable thresholds have been crossed. That is, I believe that Egypt in the earliest records we have had become an essentially lower-than-bestial culture while retaining the residue of more advanced technologies which were probably a mix of science, alchemy and the sort of perverse disciplines which interest Alan Moore.

Page 219 – In panel 2, Shep-shep moves the box lid into place without using his hands and in panel 7 opens the door to the suite the same way. Creepy.

Page 225-227 - Some people have asked how I selected the different scenes from Cerebus' life for "his life flashing before his eyes". I basically just flipped through the trade paperbacks at approximate regular intervals and then looked around the vicinity to see what seemed interesting to draw. It might just be me, but I think the whole point of our life flashing before our eyes is to show our souls (whoever we are) what an intrinsic waste of time it had been. Mostly unmemorable, mostly uninteresting. Although it's never described that way, I always picture it as picking up speed as it goes along (like life itself), thus the larger number of panels on page 227.

Just looking at page 227 reminds me of a gag I forgot to mention from *Latter Days:* the contrast between the Cerebus in panel 20 and panel 22. The first is based on Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and the second on former Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres. That is, Cerebus went from being Sharon-like to being Peres-like which, to me, is backwards. You're far better off to start as Peres and then grow up and become Sharon.

Page 232 and 233 – I've gotten a lot of speculation and inquiries as to how I selected who was in "The Light" and who wasn't. It really depends on what your personal prejudices are and how you read it. I mean this could be heaven or Heaven which I gather has been the conventional interpretation of those who have had near-death experiences and which I've been speculating on since I first decided in 1979 that Cerebus would die in the last issue.

(One of the earliest and most recurrent speculations involved picturing myself in that situation. I die and there are all the people I knew when I was alive, beckoning to me from the Light. Okay, so I pass over to the Other Side. Then what? I can think of very few people, either friends or relatives who have died to whom I would have much of anything to say, nor could I picture myself being interested in what they had to say. And what? Now I'm supposed to spend the rest of eternity pretending I'm interested in them? That didn't sound much like Heaven to me)

On the one hand, it would seem to indicate that the bar is set awfully low and that everyone ultimately gets into heaven or Heaven if they even once had a kind word for an invalid or bought a box of Girl Scout cookies when they were fifteen. My personal guess (and the larger point I was trying to make in showing so much of the Cerebus cast "in the Light")—in line with the metaphor (or actuality) of the life of the neutrino as documented in the Prologue—is that the batting average is not good: most people end up ensnared by the Light and only two out of every hundred actually achieve a state of freedom.

Page 234 - In its serialized form there was a flurry of individuals who thought that I was depicting Rick, Jaka and Bear here. I'm not sure if that wasn't just a romantic prejudice that always sees husbands and wives even where they don't exist. I'm hoping that the fact that it was established three times at least in the course of this last storyline that the top two places in Cerebus' masculine pantheon belong to Ham Ernestway and Bear will make that a less common perception.

And if that doesn't work, then I'll just say it here, plain as day: No, that's not Rick, Jaka and Bear, that's Ham, Jaka and Bear.

Page 236 and 237 – Is Cerebus in Hell?

I've been asked that a lot since the last issue came out. Again, I think it is worth the reminder that what I am attempting here is to document as accurately as possible what we know about death as a process. That is, I think everyone will go through this situation (with some exceptions like suicides which never seem to experience the traditional near-death phenomena when they are brought back from the brink of death. I think suicide takes you out of the Big Game which is why it's a Really Bad Idea) when they die. All I am suggesting is that making a hasty decision to Go Into the Light might not be the wisest course of action. Of course, I don't know if there *is* a choice. Some people describe themselves as being drawn upward by an irresistible force, in which case none of us is going to have a say in the matter. On the other hand, most people are so scared of being alone that they will make a beeline for other people no matter who those people are. As I've indicated, my first thought is, Who's up there? (or in there, or out there, as the case may be). Does it seem likely that Dead Relative X or Dead Friend Y would be in Heaven? Can I think of anything that they did in their lifetime that would warrant "making the cut"? I mean, with my relatives and my friends, I'm not exactly expecting standing room only if any of this is based on merit.

As you can see, Trust No One goes a long way with me.

So what am I going to do (someone asked me)? Well, if it's possible, I think I'm going to sit down and think about it and I'll probably pray and ask God for His guidance and to save me from whatever-it-is if that's His will or to make it go away if that's His will and whatever-it-is is just a post-mortem scam to go along with all the scams and attempted scams that were run on me while I was alive.

So, I'm just going to sit down by myself for all eternity (the same someone asked)? Possibly. As I say, being alone is not the fearful idea for me that it is for most people. It's really my preference. Also, when the Koran talks about The Last Day and people awakening from the dead to their new incarnation evidently if you ask anyone how long they had been dead before they awoke, their answer will be, A day or part of a day. Even those people who have been dead for thousands of years. So, I might just sit down and mull things over and pray for what will seem, to me, like a few hours or so and the next thing I know?

It'll be Judgement Day.

One thing is for sure, I'm not going to find out 'til I get there and neither will you. Hope you turn out to be one of the two and not one of the ninety-eight.

Thanks for reading my story.

Take care.

Dave Sim completed his work on the Cerebus *storyline*
December 17, 2003
Gerhard completed his work on the Cerebus *storyline*
December 24, 2003

The Last Day by Dave Sim and Gerhard

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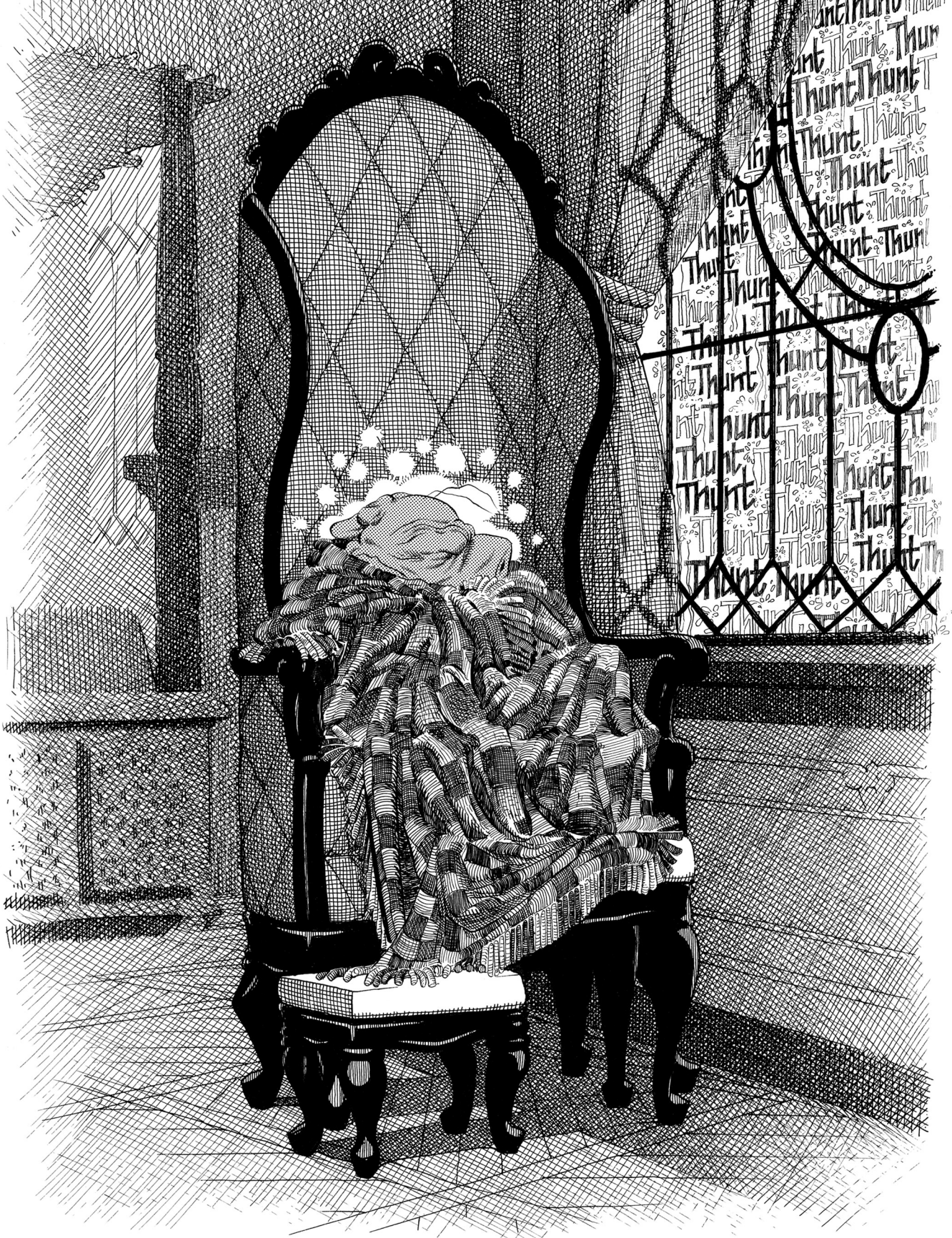
above right: a sample of page 60, as it appeared in previous printings of *The Last Day*
below right: the same page, scanned directly from the original art board for this restored volume.

SPECIAL THANKS

Special thanks to Jennifer DiGiacomo for her patronage and support.
In Memory of Jeff Seiler, proofreader extraordinaire.



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